NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAMISM AND
WOMEN IN CIVIL SOCIETY:
A LOOK AT TURKEY AND EGYPT**

by

Katherine A. Lockhart

March 2015

Thesis Advisor: Anne Marie Baylouny
Second Reader: Ryan Gingeras

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		Form Approved OMB No. 0704–0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington, DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)	2. REPORT DATE March 2015	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAMISM AND WOMEN IN CIVIL SOCIETY: A LOOK AT TURKEY AND EGYPT		5. FUNDING NUMBERS
6. AUTHOR(S) Katherine A. Lockhart		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB Protocol number _____N/A_____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

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14. SUBJECT TERMS Political Islam, Women, Women in Egypt, Women in Turkey, education, employment, political opportunities			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 91
			16. PRICE CODE
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

NSN 7540–01–280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2–89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239–18

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Katherine A. Lockhart
Captain, United States Air Force
B.S., U.S. Air Force Academy, 2006
M.E., Colorado State University, 2010

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(MIDDLE EAST, SOUTH ASIA, SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA)

from the

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
March 2015

Author: Katherine A. Lockhart

Approved by: Anne Marie Baylouny, Ph.D.
                Thesis Advisor

                Ryan Gingeras, Ph.D.
                Second Reader

                Mohammed Hafez, Ph.D.
                Chair, Department of National Security Affairs

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ABSTRACT

In the lead up to the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S. government emphasized how the military intervention would liberate Afghani women from the Taliban, echoing an old colonial discourse that Muslim women need saving. This study reviews the effects of Islamism, especially when it influences political decisions, on women. In particular, the study focuses on whether there is a correlation between rising Islamism and women in civil society in Turkey and Egypt through the variables of political, educational, and employment opportunities.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I.   INTRODUCTION

A.   RESEARCH QUESTION

On November 17, 2001, First Lady Laura Bush gave a radio address describing how the U.S. invasion in Afghanistan was liberating Afghani women.[1] She hit on a common Western fear: Islamic radicals want to expand their ideology to the rest of the world.[2] Western discourse often focuses on the narrative of the oppressed Muslim woman and frequently claims that outward expressions of Islam, such as veiling, are symbolic of this oppression.

The rise in popularity of moderate Islamist political parties in many countries has reignited this concern for women. The question becomes: How has the rise of Islamism affected the role of women in civil society? The position of women in the public and private spheres has a deep connection to culture and nationalism in the Middle East, especially in countries like Turkey and Egypt that have rich pre-Islamic histories and recent secular pasts. As the popularity of Islamic parties increases and societies turn more overtly religious, will this cause women's potential to expand their realm of rights to increase or decrease? It is possible that an Islamic frame will enable women to gain more rights, or the opposite could be true and rising Islamism to decrease women's rights.

B.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH QUESTION

Understanding the role of women in civil society in the Middle East has important implications for the West. From a policy standpoint, assumptions made by Western leaders concerning Muslim women can be disadvantageous. By imposing Western views on what women's liberation should look like, the West narrows the possibilities for Muslim women and may be discouraging them from publicly discussing their own futures.

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[1] Lila abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" *American Anthropologist* 104, no. 3 (September 2002): 784. http://www.class.uh.edu/faculty/tsommers/moral%20diversity/cultural%20relativism,%20muslim%20women.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

By focusing on the two case studies of Egypt and Turkey, this study's goal is to explore the historic role of women in these societies and what effect Western intervention has had on women in the past. Furthermore, this study will review how the growth of Islamism can affect the role of women in society.

C.   LITERATURE REVIEW

What if the Western idea of what's best for Muslim women is detrimental? Academic literature seems to contradict Western public perception of the role of women in Muslim society, and research shows that some oppressive practices in Islamic societies have origins outside of Islam, others are reactions to colonialism, and yet others can be interpreted as a form of resistance to outside cultures.[3] While Western thought has focused on outward appearance, some Muslim women embrace Islam and use it as a frame to advance their societal positions.[4]

Western policy has focused on the plight of the Muslim woman. Policy makers point to certain aspects of Islam, such as the fact that inequality is legally accepted. Women and minorities are defined as different, and as such they have different rights. While men from other religions can convert, women cannot change the essence of what makes them different and will always be legally categorized differently than Muslim men.[5] Although there is oppression of women in many Muslim countries, the narrative of intervention to liberate women is used to justify military operations undertaken for other reasons. Furthermore, women are oppressed in a majority of countries in the developing world. George and Laura Bush both referenced the plight of Afghani women in statements prior to the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan.[6]   Somewhat ironically,

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[3] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Introduction," in *Women, Islam, & the State*, ed. by Deniz Kandiyoti (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1991), 13-7; Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam* (New Haven: Yale University, 1992), 235-42; Maria Holt and Haifaa Jawad, *Women, Islam, and Resistance in the Arab World* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013)*,* 2-4; Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 784.

[4] Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 788; Smeeta Mishra, "'Saving' Muslim Women and Fighting Muslim men: Analysis of representations in the New York Times," *Global Media Journal* 6, no. 19 (Fall 2007): 2, http://lass.purduecal.edu/cca/gmj/fa07/gmj-fa07-mishra.htm; Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 239; Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 18.

[5] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 7.

[6] Mishra, "'Saving,'" 2, 4; Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 784.

"President George W. Bush called for the 'liberation' of women in Afghanistan while American forces occupied their territory."[7] Laura Bush stated that American soldiers would free Afghani women from their oppressive homes and equated the war on terror to a battle to further women's rights.[8]

Emphasizing Muslim women as victims is not a new discourse for the West. As Margot Badran states, colonists "used the trope of the 'oppressed Muslim woman,' a set piece in Orientalist discourse, displaying a feigned concern for 'her' plight, in order to justify colonial and neo-colonial incursions into Muslim societies, or simply to make a show of arrogant superiority."[9] The concern for women also can focus on superficial issues; prior to the 2001 invasion, the West defined a liberated Afghani woman as one that could buy cosmetics and popular clothing.[10] This superficial concern for women's consumer consumption ignores the fact that Muslim women face complex challenges and further widens the gender divide.[11] Additionally, the narrative illustrates an unspoken belief that Islam is inferior to Western political and ideological thought.[12] In order to believe that Muslims need saving, one must assume that Islam in itself is detrimental to women and that Western culture is inherently more beneficial to women.[13]

Some of the practices the West points to as oppressive in Muslim societies have roots in government policies, socioeconomic symbols, and pre-Islamic cultural traditions instead of in Islam.[14] Beth Baron explains how governments that wanted to modernize chose not to advance women's rights or family law, even when these laws were based on pre-Islamic traditions, in order to minimize the impact of industrialization and keep their

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[7] Mishra, "'Saving,'" 4.

[8] Mishra, "'Saving,,'" 2; Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 784.

[9] Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2009) 1.

[10] Mishra, "'Saving,'" 1.

[11] Ibid., 1, 9.

[12] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 2.

[13] Ibid., 245.

[14] Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 13-4, 17; Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 242.

constituency's anger contained.[15] Despite the efforts, modernization profoundly changed society, and these changes produced a reactionary backlash based on traditional religious and patriarchal ideals.[16] Ahmed expands on the belief that state policy can drive oppression by theorizing that "the misogynist rhetoric let loose into the social system implicitly sanctions male violence toward women and sets up women—rather than the corruptions and bankruptcies of the government—as targets of male frustration at poverty and powerlessness."[17]

Economic transformation and societal modernization, which the West believes will help women, might actually be detrimental to them. As Baron explains, "The creation of local machinery to channel development funds which are in principle designed to have empowering consequences for women and the increased presence of women in the workforce can often be seen to coexist with measures strengthening the patriarchal features of the society."[18] Women's increased presence in the workforce led to a fear of job scarcity; the fear of women competing for jobs has existed since the late nineteenth century.[19] Furthermore, women working conflicted with social status. Some progressive families did not take issue with their women gaining an education, but viewed working outside the home as a necessity for the lower class.[20] Economic class structures and expectations play into women's outward appearance as well. The veil and other types of covering are signs not only of piety, but also of social standing. Women choose when and how to cover themselves depending on the situation.[21]

The role of women in Islamic societies is shaped further by imperialism; the challenges they face cannot be fully understood without looking at women's symbolic role during colonialism. Colonists "used the argument that the cultures of the colonized

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[15] Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 13, 17.

[16] Ibid., 14.

[17] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 242.

[18] Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 16-7.

[19] Juan Ricardo Cole, "Feminism, Class, and Islam in Turn of the Century Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 13, no. 4 (November 1981): 391, JSTOR (162906).

[20] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 190.

[21] Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 786.

peoples degraded women in order to legitimize Western domination and justify colonial policies of actively trying to subvert the cultures and religions of the colonized peoples."[22] This feigned concern was limited in scope; for example, English authorities in Egypt opposed veiling but did not support education or suffrage for women.[23] During colonial times, feminists argued that women had to abandon their native culture in order to modernize and gain rights; however, this concept was limited to Islamic women—in comparison, no one told Victorian English women to abandon their dress and culture during their feminist movement.[24] The impacts of colonialism still persist; Islamist groups use women as symbols due to the colonial powers' use of women to illustrate the perceived shortcomings of Islamic culture.[25]

Starting with early twentieth century nationalist movements, women found themselves more in the public sphere. Their role, however, was sometimes limited to being symbols of cultural nationalism. Nationalists used the position of women as a frame in their movements but sometimes excluded women from actual participation. Women took this gender segregation as an opportunity to mobilize and form their own groups.[26] Baron explains, "In spite of the obstacles, women devised their own forms and forums for shaping the national polity. In looking at women's political culture, a dynamic picture emerges as women alternated between and among partisan, feminist, Islamist, social, and other politics in the name of nation-building."[27]

These nationalist feminists prioritized independence over women's rights because they believed women's rights would come naturally after independence.[28] This, however, did not occur, and women's work in nationalist movements was written out of history and

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[22] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 243.

[23] Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 784.

[24] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 244.

[25] Ibid., 237.

[26] Beth Baron, *Egypt As a Woman: Nationalists, Gender, and Politics* (Berkley: University of California, 2005), 10, http://site.ebrary.com/lib/nps/reader.action?docID=10082407&ppg=30.

[27] Ibid., 9.

[28] Ibid.

women were seen as representations of indigenous culture.[29] Margot Badran states that "the importance assigned to cultural symbols was different for the two sexes. Men could change without losing their cultural authenticity . . . while the burdens of maintaining cultural and social continuity were placed on women."[30] The burden of maintaining culture excluded women from the political community, and women became the focus of policy, not part of the policy creation.[31] Nationalists adopted a new family model and used the model as a metaphor for the state. In this symbolic family, women were viewed as the "mothers of the nation."[32] Nationalists endorsed the new family model because it was seen as integral to the successful adoption of capitalism, and the symbolic woman became an educated partner in marriage and a market consumer.[33] The place and actions of women were seen as a representation of overall modernization but also as a symbol of the community's traditional morals.[34]

This symbolic use of women is still used to fight against Western cultural expansion. Islamist groups use the frame of resistance against neocolonialism today. Some women see accepting traditional patriarchy as a form of resistance against outsiders,[35] and "the increasingly popular practice of resistance within an Islamic framework is enabling some women both to access sources of dignity and empowerment and also to adopt more active roles."[36] The veil—a term that encompasses head coverings ranging from the *hijab*, or head scarf, to the full face-covering *burqa*—has become many things: an embracement of indigenous culture that colonialism changed

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[29] Baron, *Egypt As a Woman*, 3.

[30] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 26.

[31] Nadje Al-Ali, *Secularism, Gender, and the State: The Egyptian Women's Movement* (New York: Cambridge University, 2000), 45.

[32] Holt and Jawad, *Women, Islam, and Resistance*, 4.

[33] Baron, *Egypt As a Woman,* 5-6.

[34] Holt and Jawad, *Women, Islam, and Resistance,* 14-5.

[35] Ibid., 5.

[36] Holt and Jawad, *Women, Islam, and Resistance,* 4.

with imposed dress standards, a form of resistance against neocolonialism, and a rejection of further Western cultural encroachment.[37]

Research has shown that instead of feeling oppressed by their religion, some women see Islam as an answer to how to rectify their lack of rights. As Leila Ahmed states, "But for the lay Muslim it is not [the] legalistic voice but rather the ethical, egalitarian voice of Islam that speaks most clearly and insistently. It is because Muslim women hear this egalitarian voice that they often declare (generally to the astonishment of non-Muslims) that Islam is nonsexist."[38] Islam, when it first was founded, was revolutionary for its times. In some ways, it brought gender relations in the Arab peninsula in line with surrounding communities, and in other ways, Islam afforded women more rights than other women in the Middle East.[39] Furthermore, practices deemed Islamic might be gender practices from surrounding communities that were assimilated into the Islamic community; for example, the practices of veiling and gender segregation were widespread throughout the Middle East and Mediterranean region.[40]

There are women in the Middle East drawn to Islamist political parties because of the parties' principles, morals, and resistance to Western cultural expansion. As Maria Holt and Haifaa Jawad explain, "It seems likely that some modern Islamist groups in the Arab world are engaging with modernity in order to create a more inclusive society. If women have felt left out of 'nation making,' they may be better able to relate to the Islamist grand narrative of resistance."[41] Islamist groups support an enhanced position for women within an Islamic framework. For example, the Muslim Brotherhood has supported opportunities for women in education and employment. The Brotherhood supported education as a way for women to be better wives, and they supported women in any job as long as the women upheld moral standards.[42]

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[37] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 145; Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 235.

[38] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 239.

[39] Ibid., 4.

[40] Ibid., 5.

[41] Holt and Jawad, *Women, Islam, and Resistance,* 16.

[42] Ahmed, *Women and Gender*, 194.

This respect for Islamic principles and the concept of *itjihad,* or independent study of Islamic scriptures,[43] have inspired some women to go back to the sacred texts to make the case that oppressive practices in many Islamic societies are not in fact Islamic.[44] Instead of looking toward the West as an example on how to gain rights, they look to feminist movements in other Muslim countries, like Iran.[45] Freda Hussain supports the use of Islam by women, she states "that change in the 'role of Muslim women must be brought about, by the elimination of feudal Islam through Islam . . . The Quranic text must be related to the present context and used to liberate women from male domination.'"[46] Furthermore, outward symbols of personal piety, such as Islamic dress, can afford women more freedom. Hanna Papnek states that the burqa in Pakistan is a form of "portable seclusion." [47] The garment gives women the ability to move freely through the public sphere without sacrificing their morality.[48] Furthermore, veiling enables women to be less passive in the public sphere than their secular counterparts because it established the women's religious bona fides.[49]

By focusing on the old colonial discourse of liberating Muslim women, Western leaders are in fact damaging the position of these women by igniting anti-Western sentiment which increases the controls on women in order to maintain traditional culture. Contrary to Western perception, Islam might enable women to expand their role in civil society through an Islamic framework.

D.   EXPLANATIONS AND HYPOTHESES

Historically, the place of women in civil society has been inextricably linked to definitions of nationalism and culture in Turkey and Egypt. Since political Islam is becoming part of the national identity in these countries, women might have more

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[43] Holt and Jawad, *Women, Islam, and Resistance,* 13.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 788.

[46] Mishra, "'Saving,'" 19.

[47] Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women," 785.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Kandiyoti, "Introduction," 18.

success advancing their place in civil society through an Islamic framework. Women have played an integral part in Islam since its founding, so allowing and encouraging women to find their rights through the framework of Islam could be more effective than Western imposed ideas of feminism. Allowing Islam and faith into the public sphere might actually allow women greater freedoms outside of their home. Furthermore, Islamic parties tend to rely on women as a key demographic to get elected, and organic demands from members and constituents might influence party platforms.

This study will research the existence of a relationship between the rise of Islamism and the role of women. The rise of Islamism will be measured through the electoral popularity of Islamic political parties, as well as through various studies on public opinions. The role of women will be measured by educational opportunities, participation in government, employment opportunities, and status under family law. Current rhetoric by Islamist leaders will be reviewed to ascertain whether leaders favor expanded roles for women. Hypotheses include:

- H1: There is no correlation between Islamist politics and opportunities for women. The issue of a woman's place in society is tied to other factors such as cultural nationalism and Western imperialism, preventing a direct correlation.
- H2: The rise in popularity of Islamist politics and Islamic practices in Turkey and Egypt led to more opportunities in education and public employment for women.
- H3: The rise of political Islam resulted in fewer opportunities for women.

E.   RESEARCH DESIGN

This paper focuses on two case study countries: Egypt and Turkey. This study utilizes Egypt and Turkey due to their historical leadership in the greater Middle East in terms of public policy. Both countries have rich pre-Islamic histories and had secular governments following colonial independence. Furthermore, both countries have a long history of Islamist political movements that have had success in recent years. Given the changing environment in Egypt, this study will touch on current issues facing Egyptian women, but focuses primarily on the role and rights of women before the 2013 military takeover.

This thesis reviews the historic role women played in Egypt and Turkey and the significance of their role as cultural symbols. This research was completed by a review of current scholarship on the subject of women and will utilize mostly secondary sources. The review of women's place in regards to modern advances for women proceeds through a review of the statistical information on women in government, public opinion polls, educational enrollment, and labor statistics. The goal of analysis was to see if there is a correlation between rising Islamism and greater rights for women.

F.   THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis addresses how the role of women in civil society is currently changing in Turkey and Egypt. Chapter II focuses on Turkey. Starting in the late Ottoman period and ending with the rise of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the chapter reviews how leaders used the position of women to further their own agendas. The chapter also reviews how a woman's political, educational, and employment status changed depending on which government was in power. Chapter III focuses on Egypt. The early twentieth century's Islamic feminist movement is discussed, as well as how the impact of authoritarian governments affected political freedoms and economic opportunities for women. In Chapter IV, this study reviews primary data for Egypt and Turkey over the last 30 years. It illustrates women's roles in civil society based on political participation, educational enrollment, and overall employment. The study reviews Islamist political position and looks for a correlation between Islamism and the role of women. Chapter IV also touches on other possible factors that relate to women's position in society. Chapter V concludes the study with a discussion of possible correlations between women's place in civil society and political Islamism and possible policy implications.

II.   WOMEN IN TURKEY: A MIXED RECORD

The role of women in Turkish society is complex. Since the late Ottoman period, the role of women in civil society has been used as a symbol by ruling elites to maintain their power. Ruling governments—whether Islamist or secular—have appealed to both reformers and conservatives by increasing educational, employment, and political opportunities for women while maintaining or making slow changes to family laws.

A.   WESTERN INFLUENCE AND THE TANZIMAT REFORMS

Growing from a reaction to Western reforms, the first movement to change the status of women in the Ottoman Empire came from the Young Ottomans. Although traditional and Islamic, the Young Ottomans saw benefits to increasing educational and employment opportunities for women.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, increased interaction with the West brought with it societal change. Due to international pressures, the Ottomans enacted a series of reforms, called Tanzimat, aimed at increasing modernization and protecting minorities. The Tanzimat reforms appeased the Western powers at the expense of parts of society that once had better standing—such as artisans and craftsmen—leading to "deep cleavages in Ottoman society."[50] Western influence led to a complex situation for women; "the influence of the West was… mediated through multiple and varying levels of 'othering' that must have had an impact on women's positionality, daily lives, and apprehensions of the 'modern.'"[51] Attacks on cultural symbols, such as the headscarf or veil, led to a rise in defense of its wear. Although not all women wore the scarf for religious reasons, head coverings were common and not restricted to just Muslims.[52] The

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[50] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward Questions on Women and Modernity in Turkey," in *Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East*, ed. by Lila abu-Lughod (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1998,) 273.

[51] Ibid., 275.

[52] Emelie A. Olson, "Muslim Identity and Secularism in Contemporary Turkey: 'The Headscarf Dispute,'" *Anthropological Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (1985): 164, JSTOR (3318146).

west, however, saw veiling as a representation of Ottoman backwardness. Therefore, the Ottomans started to equate the scarf to a cultural symbol that needed to be defended.[53]

Seen by many in Turkey as capitulations to the Western powers, the Tanzimat reforms gave rise to the Young Ottoman movement. The Young Ottomans blended Western ideas, such as liberalism, with Islam.[54] Although the Tanzimat reforms were pushed by European empires, the Young Ottomans felt that the reforms excessively increased the Ottoman government's power and that the government had unacceptably embraced secularism.[55] The Young Ottomans reacted to the Tanzimat reforms by rejecting some Western concepts but accepting and embracing others: they embraced nationalism and attempted Islamize it.[56] The rise of the Young Ottomans led to a dichotomy for women. While on one hand the traditionalists and "male polemicists on questions relating to women and the family used the condition of women to express deeper anxieties concerning the cultural integrity of the Ottoman/Muslim polity in the face of Western influence,"[57] the Young Ottomans can be seen as pioneers of women's reform.[58] They called to reform the marriage system, offered women greater educational opportunities, and believed that certain reforms to women's rights were necessary steps towards modernization, even from an Islamic perspective.[59]

B.   1908–1918: SECOND CONSTITUTIONAL PERIOD

Despite cultural debates on the role of women, women were actively recruited into the labor field as the Empire attempted to fight consecutive wars and needed manpower during the Second Constitutional Period from 1908 to 1918. During this time two different narratives about Ottoman culture, and within these narratives two different

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[53] Imtiaz Ahmad, "Why Is the Veil Such a Contentious Issue?" *Economic and Political Weekly* 41, no. 49 (2006): 5038, JSTOR (4418998).

[54] Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey," in *Women, Islam & the State*, ed. by Deniz Kandiyoti, (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1991), 25.

[55] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 272-3.

[56] Ibid., 273.

[57] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 23.

[58] Ibid., 25.

[59] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 25; Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 273.

conceptions on the place of women, emerged—the Western and Islamist models. The Western model was that Western rationalism was a necessary complement to modern technology; within this ideology, the position of Ottoman women was viewed as an indication of Ottoman backwardness.[60] Turkish nationalism added to this frame; women were seen as being elevated in pre-Islamic Turkey. The low place of women in Ottoman society was seen as a result of Arab and Persian cultural influence.[61] Ziya Gökalp, a Turkish writer, advocated for 'Moral Turkism'—a return to pre-Islamic Turkish tradition of monogamous, equal, democratic marriage. He felt that although Islam improved the lives of Arabian women when it started, the nuclear family was the best model for the future and had cultural routes in Turkish history.[62] In contrast, the Islamist frame saw Western modernization as inevitable but Western culture and family customs as unallowable.[63] This competing look at culture resulted in a social situation in which women were seen as the ultimate symbols of indigenous culture. Denis Kandiyoti summarizes, "As will become clearer in the discussion of ideological currents during the Second Constitutional period . . . later debates on women would both reveal and create bitter cleavages among the Ottoman elite itself, when the condition of women became more self-consciously identified as the touchstone of Ottoman cultural 'integrity or 'backwardness' as the case might be."[64] The role of women in Ottoman society was further complicated by socio-economic status. Gender roles varied greatly depending on class.[65] Furthermore, women's first interactions with modernization took forms depending on status: upper-class women were exposed to Western culture through their tutors, religious minorities went to European mission schools, and Turkish Muslim women, who embraced Western ideas of liberalism, declared that a woman being in the public sphere was in line with Islamic and Turkish customs.[66]

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[60] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 33.

[61] Ibid., 40-1.

[62] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 279; Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 34-5.

[63] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 32.

[64] Ibid., 26.

[65] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 282.

[66] Ibid., 277.

1.   Women in Civil Society—Education, Politics, and Employment

The Second Constitutional period led to increased opportunities for women in the political, economic, and educational realms. The role of Islam in society complicated women's situations. While some used Islam as a platform for change, others reacted to the vast societal changes by calling for increased traditionalism.

Women became active in publishing articles, protesting for more rights, and supporting the state. One woman, Fatma Aliye Hanim, contributed to a women's magazine that focused on providing advice on the family and Islam.[67] After World War I, women took an active role in protests against the post-war occupation. Furthermore, women set up resistance organizations parallel to the occupation resistance movement run by men.[68]

Economically, changes prior to World War I were designed to increase the size of the local labor force and were targeted at women. Schools for midwives and teachers opened in the mid-nineteenth century.[69] Educational opportunities further increased for women, including mandatory primary school in 1913.[70] Increased vocational and business education opportunities led to more women going into business during the war years.[71] Even more women were needed in the labor force during the Balkan Wars and World War I since the men were on the front lines.[72] Kandiyoti states that "it was during World War I that the massive loss of male labour to the front created a demand for women's labour. The growth of female employment did not remain confined to white-collar jobs in post offices, banks, municipal services and hospitals but involved attempts at wider mobilization throughout the Anatolian provinces."[73] Furthermore, the Red

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[67] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 27.

[68] Ibid., 37.

[69] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 28.

[70] Erik Jan Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004), Kindle edition, 122.

[71] Ibid., 30.

[72] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 274.

[73] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 30.

Crescent Society trained women to be nurses, and they took an active role treating battlefield injuries.[74]

The movement of women into the public sphere had unintended consequences. The loss of the protection offered by veiling and seclusion, coupled with rise in amorous relationships instead of family prearrangements, resulted in men believing they had freer access to women. Since the connection of a woman's chastity to her family's honor did not dissipate, women had to be extremely careful to guard their purity against men's new expectations.[75] This created a challenge for women, as they "were thrust upon a public world of men whose habits of heterosocial interaction were restricted and shallow. This created unprecedented problems of identity management for women who had to devise new sets of signals and codes in order to function in the public realm without compromising their respectability."[76]

2.   Marriage and Family Law Reform

While women's place and opportunities in civil society increased in the realms of education and employment during the Second Constitutional Period, they struggled to see concrete changes to family law. Change came slowly, with the first hurdle being women attending entertainment and political events.[77] Ottoman attempts at modernization did not include family law until 1917.[78] Central to family law reform was the debate on the ideal Ottoman family. This debate was a metaphor for a greater discussion about society and government. The Ottoman patriarch could be seen as a symbol equivalent to the absolute power of the sultan and the upper class. The wish to move toward a more democratic nuclear family had parallels to the wish to move toward democracy.[79] The push for the nuclear family was tied to the perceived scientifically ideal living situation of the time. The Ottomans were interested in healthy, procreative families due to demographic issues

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[74] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 30.

[75] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 282.

[76] Ibid., 283.

[77] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 122.

[78] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 27.

[79] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 278.

they faced after they lost the Balkan territories.[80] World War I also brought changes to Ottoman family life. The government enacted mandatory labor laws that enabled provincial women to work in fields previously closed to them. Marriage became mandatory for both sexes, and having children was financially rewarded by the government.[81] Kandiyoti summarizes the state of gender during this period: "it was not merely the material aspects of procreation that came under scrutiny but the psychological and emotional tone of family life itself … what was at stake was not just the remaking of women but the wholesale refashioning of gender and gender relations."[82]

C.   1923: KEMALISM

After almost 10 continuous years of war, the Turkish Republic was proclaimed on October 29, 1923, with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as the first president.[83] Ataturk's elevation ushered in a program of societal transformation. Daily life for women changed dramatically, and "early reforms modeled on Western ideals empowered women in the public sphere—especially in such areas as education, political enfranchisement, and dress—but left the private sphere (and most of Turkey's rural population) untouched."[84] This resulted in a situation where women were not individually empowered.[85]

1.   New Opportunities

Kemalism represented an "ideological break" from the old system under the Ottomans; new realities included women being given the status of citizens in the new republic, a wave of Turkish nationalism, and an embrace of secularism,.[86] One particular change was a push to end the wear of traditional dress. Ataturk saw head covering as an

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[80] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 280-1.

[81] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 30-1.

[82] Kandiyoti, "Some Awkward," 281.

[83] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 106, 166.

[84] Anna Louie Sussman, "Why Turkey is Backsliding on Women's Rights," *The Atlantic*, June 16, 2011, http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/06/why-turkey-is-backsliding-on-womens-rights/240547/.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 39.

un-Turkish tradition imported from Ottoman Arab, Persian, and Byzantine societies. Due to this, one of the secular reforms enacted was the 1925 Hat Law that outlawed the fez, or traditional male Ottoman hat. This law did not comment on women's dress; however, women were expected to change due to social pressure.[87] As Ataturk stated, "Our women are sensitive and as intelligent as we are . . . Let them show their faces to the world and allow them to observe the world carefully. We have nothing to fear."[88] The expectation of the new Turkish woman was that she would take advantage of all her new rights: education, access to politics, and unveiling.[89] In terms of politics, women were granted the right to vote and the ability to hold office on December 5, 1934.[90]

Women took advantage of other increased opportunities to participate in civil society. First, upper class women began attending public events. Ataturk included his wife and adopted daughters in official events, and photographs of events and ceremonies showed women actively participating. This change in public perception of acceptable behavior led to a generation of women becoming politically active.[91] The changes made during the Kemalist era resulted in greater participation of women in public life; however, some of these changes were not long-lasting. Women had the highest number of representatives in the National Assembly during the First Republic in 1937 when they reached four and a half percent of the delegates. The percentage of women declined after that year.[92] Furthermore, independent political organizations were suppressed or inhibited.[93] One example of this is the case of the Turkish Women's Federation (TWF). Founded in 1924, the TWF hosted the 12th Congress of the International Federation of

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[87] Roff Smith, "Why Turkey Lifted Its Ban on the Islamic Headscarf," *National Geographic*, October 11, 2013, http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/10/131011-hijab-ban-turkey-islamic-headscarf-ataturk/; Olson, "'Muslim Identity and Secularism," 164-5.

[88] *My Head is Mine: Women in Istanbul*, directed by Petrus van der Let and Andrea Simon (Vienna, Austria: Arcadia Pictures, 2001), DVD.

[89] Banu Gokariksel and Katharyne Mitchell,"Veiling, Secularism, and the Neoliberal Subject: National Narratives and Supranational Desires in Turkey and France," *Global Networks* 5, no. 2 (2005): 156, Wiley Online (10.1111/j.1471-0374.2005.00112.x).

[90] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 177; Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 23.

[91] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 41.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

Women in Istanbul, where international delegates praised Turkey and the leadership of Ataturk for granting women's suffrage. The TWF was disbanded shortly after the conference, in 1935. It was determined that with suffrage the group had accomplished its goal: women had equal rights.[94] One of the reasons for the lack of support for independent women's groups was that the government wanted to keep control of women's issues. As Kandiyoti states, "Women's emancipation under Kemalism was part of a broader political project of nation-building and [secularization] … however, the authoritarian nature of the single-party state and its attempt to harness the 'new woman' to the creation and reproduction of a uniform citizenry aborted the possibility for autonomous women's movements."[95]

2.   Marriage and Family Law Reform

In terms of concrete changes to marriage and family laws, the Kemalist regime acted slowly. The first National Assemblies post-occupation did not enact the sweeping changes to women's status that women who participated in the liberation movement expected. At the time, changes were seen as too drastic and likely to offend some of the ruling party's constituency.[96] This slow movement seemed at odds with women's involvement during the wars. During the "War of National Liberation, peasant women in Anatolia… played critical roles which were celebrated and glorified in public monuments and patriotic rhetoric alike. Yet the coalition of nationalist forces which united behind Mustafa Kemal included men of religion who were going to remain totally inflexible on the question of women's emancipation."[97] After power was consolidated in the hands of Ataturk and his Republican People's Party in 1924,[98] the party had the ability to make hard changes. The Turkish Civil Code of 1926 resulted in major changes to family law; it cut ties with Muslim religious laws, banned polygyny, and gave women equal rights to

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[94] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 41; Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 180.

[95] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 43.

[96] Ibid., 38.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 176.

divorce.[99] This sweeping change can be seen just as much as a movement toward secularism as it can be called a victory for women.

D.   AFTER KEMAL: POLITICAL INSTABILITY AND MANDATED SECULARISM

The political strife and instability that characterized Turkey in between the Kemalist era and AK Party's electoral victory affected women just as it affected all Turkish citizens. The period between 1950 and 2002 can be characterized as politically unstable.[100] After World War II, the Kemalist one-party system that ran the country since 1923 was forced to democratize due to internal socio-economic pressures and external international politics.[101] By the 1957 elections, the Democratic Party that had succeeded Kemal's Republican People's Party, had grown deeply unpopular in urban areas. In order to stay in power, they appealed to religious constituents. This pandering resulted in the party being labeled as Islamist and anti-secularist.[102] The political situation continued to deteriorate, and the military staged a coup on May 27, 1960. This coup established a pattern; the ruling government would be accused of mismanagement or anti-secularism, tensions would rise, and then the military would take over and restore order. Between 1960 and 2002 there were four military coups.[103]

The period before the 1980 coup was characterized by a mass polarization of the society, and the coup brought about sweeping changes. Prior to it, there had been a rise in Islamic expressions in the public sphere including wearing Islamic dress, reciting Islamic poetry, using Arabic, and building mosques.[104] Islam was just one side of the escalating conflict, and each political group came to be known by a specific type of dress: "the conspicuous and constant 'signing' of religious and political views through dress and hair by extremists on all fronts was seen as both inflaming passions and making the 'enemy'

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[99] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 22-3.

[100] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 220-332.

[101] Ibid., 206-9.

[102] Ibid., 221, 232.

[103] Ibid., 240-323.

[104] Olson, "'Muslim Identity and Secularism," 166.

on both sides too easily identifiable to snipers and assassins."[105] In response to this tense situation, the interim military government enacted laws to clamp down on the rise of Islamic dress and influence. One change was a ban on headscarves in the public sphere including government offices, hospitals, schools, and universities.[106] Headscarves were not the only thing banned: the military also outlawed mini-skirts and men's mustaches.[107]

In the 1980s, professional women and academics started to push back against the headscarf ban by claiming it infringed on their constitutional rights and limited their educational opportunities.[108] Throughout the next two decades, there were many protests by women who wanted to wear the veil.[109] After another military coup in 1997, the military told the government to return to secularism and enforce the laws protecting it.[110] Even so, the headscarf issue did not go away. In 1999, Merve Kavakci, a member of the Islamic Virtue Party, tried to enter Parliament while wearing a hijab.[111] She was not allowed to participate in a swearing in ceremony, and her actions contributed to the 2001 ban of her political party. Other women chose to become more creative. University students wore hats, shawls, and even wigs in order to meet their religious obligations. Some veil wearers chose to remove their veil on campuses and in government spaces, but saw it as an infringement. As one student put it, "We are forced to adjust to laws like this."[112]

E.   RISE OF THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY

The current government, led by the Justice and Development Party (AK Party), has supporters and detractors concerning its Islamist leanings and programs toward

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[105] Olson, "'Muslim Identity and Secularism," 163.

[106] Smith, "Why Turkey Lifted Its Ban."

[107] Olson, "'Muslim Identity and Secularism," 163.

[108] Ibid., 161.

[109] Unal Gundogan, "Islamist Iran and Turkey, 1979-1989: State Pragmatism and Ideological Influences," *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 7, no. 1 (2003): 9, http://www.gloria-center.org/meria/2003/03/gundogan.pdf.

[110] Gokariksel and Mitchell, "Veiling, Secularism, and the Neoliberal Subject," 153.

[111] *My Head Is Mine.*

[112] Ibid.

women. The AK Party came to power after the 2002 parliamentary elections.[113] Despite many calling the AK Party "Islamist," the party leadership rejects that claim.[114] Instead, the AK Party defines itself as "a conservative democratic mass party that situates itself at the center of the political spectrum."[115] In its political vision, the AK Party advocates for gradual culture change toward their stated moral ideals. They believe that "the conservative approach is a pioneering element of the transformation and reform process in Turkey."[116] The AK Party has enacted changes and social programs that have resulted in it having a strong female constituency. In 2011, it won fifty percent of the popular vote and fifty-five percent of the women's vote.[117] Some female activists, however, lament that despite new policies encouraging women to focus on motherhood and not on careers, many women possibly support the AK Party due to increased financial aid programs.[118]

1.   Lifting a Secular Ban

One change that has elicited praise and concern is the lifting of the headscarf ban. In the view of the AK Party, the ban prevented religious women from taking full part in civil society. Although there has been a strong backlash against attempts to lift the ban on the veil in the past, the AK Party and Prime Minister Recep Erdogan have successfully led the charge to partially change the laws. Although unsuccessful in 2007, in November

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[113] "Turkey 2002 Legislative Election," Center on Democratic Performance ERA: Election Result Archive, Binghamton University: State University of New York, accessed January 19, 2015, http://cdp.binghamton.edu/era/elections/tur02par.html.

[114] "AKP Explains Charter Changes, Slams Foreign Descriptions," *Hurriyet Daily News*, March 28, 2010, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=akp-explains-charter-changes-slams-foreign-descriptions-2010-03-28.

[115] "Political Vision of AK Parti (Justice and Development Party) 2023: Politics, Society, and the World," AK Party (AKP): AKParti English, last modified September 30, 2012, 4, http://www.akparti.org.tr/upload/documents/akparti2023siyasivizyonuingilizce.pdf.

[116] Ibid., 46.

[117] Sussman, "Why Turkey is Backsliding."

[118] Barçin Yinanç, "AKP Seeking to Create Own Women's Movement: Lawyer," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 4, 2013, http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Default.aspx?pageID=517&nID=42245&NewsCatID=339.

2012 the headscarf ban was partially lifted in schools.[119] Along with eliminating dress code requirements, the AKP allowed students to wear scarves during Koran lessons.[120]

Although some secularists reacted with alarm—the headline of the *Cumhuriyet* newspaper was, "This will end with chadors"—others saw the change as a step toward liberalization.[121] The head of the Democratic Educators' Union stated, "We will not be able to rescue the education system from the perverse consequences of the oppression, rituals, dogma and thinking of the 'cold war' period until teachers and pupils are liberated."[122] The success of this change led to further relaxation of the headscarf ban. In 2013, it was lifted for those in civil service jobs and government offices. At the time, Prime Minister Erdogan stated that the ban had prevented the women who wore it from being fully engaged in Turkish society.[123] Although secularists claim the AKP is pushing to change Turkey into an Islamic society, the AK Party maintains that the changes are liberal reforms enacted to embrace freedom of religion. Their view is that the ban prevented women from embracing opportunities and that lifting the ban is akin to embracing multiculturalism.[124]

2. Family Life under the AK Party

While the AK Party's work to overturn the headscarf ban has granted opportunities to religious women, the Party's stance on family and women's programs has caused concern for some activists. Hülya Gülbahar, a lawyer and prominent women's rights activist, feels that the AK Party's policies have progressively worsened for women.[125] In response to a draft of the 2007 Constitution that lumped women in with the

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[119] Salih Bayram, "Reporting Hijab in Turkey: Shifts in the Pro- and Anti-Ban Discourses," *Turkish Studies* 10, no. 4 (2009): 512, Taylor and Francis (10.1080/14683840903141590); Dan Butler, "Turkey lifts headscarf ban in religious schools," *Reuters*, November 28, 2012, http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/11/28/us-turkey-headscarf-idUSBRE8AR0JW20121128.

[120] Butler, "Turkey Lifts Headscarf Ban."

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Smith, "Why Turkey Lifted Its Ban."

[124] Ibid.

[125] Yinanç, "AKP Seeking."

elderly and children, Gülbahar stated, "The prime minister has openly said he does not believe in equality between men and women. Previously, there was no questioning of the principle of gender equality."[126] While the perception that women need to be protected is alarming to some, the AK Party sees its support for the family as something that sets it apart.[127] The party vision states, "The driving force behind our social policies is to protect and support families that are the strength of our community and builders of our future."[128] This prioritization of the family unit over a particular group is demonstrated by the merger of all social welfare institutions into one ministry—the Ministry of Family and Social policies.[129] For some, this merger signaled the government taking a stance that women's rights are subordinate to family issues.[130]

Even with the changes to how social welfare is run, the AK Party claims that they have several initiatives specifically targeted at women. They plan to create parenting schools, offer family counseling, provide daycare services for working mothers, and support female entrepreneurs with training and financial resources. They link several aspects of the social safety net, such as housing and income distribution, to their family policies.[131] The AKP party platform states, "Improvements shall be made in [women's] social security and working conditions taking into consideration working environment, children and family responsibilities of women."[132] The program that categorized the work of housewives as labor worthy of social security brought the AK Party both female supporters and the ire of women's rights activists who feel that it encourages women to stay home.[133]

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[126] Ibid.

[127] "Political Vision," 32.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Sussman, "Why Turkey is Backsliding."

[131] "Political Vision," 34.

[132] "Party Programme," AK Party (AKP): AKParti English, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, accessed September 29, 2014, sec. 5.7 Women, http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum.

[133] "Party Programme," sec. 5.7 Women; "Political Vision," 32; Yinanç, "AKP seeking."

The AK Party states that they support non-governmental organizations (NGOs) targeting women.[134] Women's rights activists, however, are concerned by the rise of new NGOs. Local governments are partnering with new NGOs supported by the federal government instead of the older more-established ones. The new organizations lack the continuity and expertise of the established NGOs.[135] The AK Party's success in increasing legal protection to women has been mixed. Penal code changes enacted in 2005 ensured individual rights, but that law has not been evenly enforced. In practice, rights are still seen as communal. Offenses can result in the community punishing an individual.[136] Furthermore, while the Party's vision states that they have a zero violence policy toward women and details the success the government has had in establishing violence prevention centers and shelters,[137] abuse against women is still prevalent. Forty-five percent of women between the ages of 15 and 60 have reported being physically or sexually abused.[138] One secularist narrative for this discrepancy is that "the rhetoric that sees the main mission of women as being motherhood also plays into the rise in violence against women."[139]

F.   CONCLUSION

The status of women in civil society has been used by ruling elites to maintain power in Turkey since the late Ottoman Empire. As shown by the Young Ottoman movement and the AK Party, calls for reform and increased opportunities from women can come from Islamist and conservative governments as well as from secular ones. Since the Young Ottomans, governments have pushed to increase educational and employment opportunities for women. Political opportunities for women have ebbed and flowed depending on the overall political situation. These reforms have been pushed as a reaction to Western influence, as a wartime necessity, and as a necessary modernizing

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[134] "Party Programme," sec. 5.7 Women

[135] Yinanç, "AKP Seeking."

[136] Sussman, "Why Turkey is Backsliding."

[137] "Political Vision," 35.

[138] Sussman, "Why Turkey is Backsliding."

[139] Yinanç, "AKP Seeking."

step. Improving life for women in the private sphere has been more difficult. Facing greater opposition from religious authorities, changes to family law have proved challenging, even for the secular regime of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. The AK Party appears to be continuing the trend of increasing educational opportunities while making more conservative reforms to family laws. Although seen as backwards steps by some, the changes to the headscarf ban and social bureaucracy have positively affected enough Turkish women that the AK Party enjoyed the majority of the female vote in the last Parliamentary election.[140] Overall, the historical position of women in Ottoman and Turkish civil society cannot be correlated to Islamist politics.

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[140] Sussman, "Why Turkey is Backsliding."

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III. EGYPT: RELIGIOUS FEMINISM AND STRUGGLES WITH GOVERNMENTS AND ISLAMISTS

The role of women in civil society in Egypt has vacillated depending on the ruling regime's relationship with Islamist groups. While the role of Islamists has not affected women's access to education, it has negatively affected women in the realm of family law and societal pressure. Furthermore, women's political opportunities and employment options have fluctuated depending on the regime's political and economic policies more so than on the role of Islam in society.

A. WOMEN'S ROLES THROUGH INDEPENDENCE

At the turn of the twentieth century, increased contact with modernity and the changes that capitalism, liberal thought, and colonialism brought to Egypt inspired an Islamic feminist movement.[141] Early calls for women's rights gained steam after the nationalist movement succeeded in gaining independence in 1923. Similar to Turkey, women became more prominent in the public sphere due to their involvement in the independence movement, and these same women would later fight for greater education, employment, and personal status rights.[142]

1. Early Reformers

Early calls for reform came from men as well as women. Men, due to their increased agency, are seen as the key drivers of the feminist movement. During the fight for independence, male feminists were the main target of the religious opposition. The religious authorities saw the men as being more radical than the women; however, male feminism seems to have reached its peak during this time period.[143] Even so, the push by male activists to allow female education is seen as important.[144] Nationalist Egyptian

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[141] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 215.

[142] Margot Badran, "Competing Agenda: Feminists, Islam and the State in 19th and 20th Century Egypt," in *Women, Islam & the State*, ed. by Deniz Kandiyoti, (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1991), 208.

[143] Ibid., 206-7.

[144] Al-Ali, *Secularism,* 57.

writers and politicians saw the education of women as necessary in order for women to meet their moral obligation to teach the next generation. In this way, the educated woman was a necessity "in the production of cultured young men dedicated to the nationalist cause."[145] Furthermore, nationalists argued that the failure to educate women equated to failing to uphold Islamic values, and that failure caused European colonization.[146]

One key male feminist was Shaikh Muhammed Abduh, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, who believed in ending the practices of full face veiling and seclusion, providing greater educational opportunities, limiting polygamy, and ending men's ability to easily initiate a divorce.[147] Another male feminist that shared many of Shaikh Abduh's beliefs was Qasim Amin, a lawyer and judge who believed the core problem for Egyptian women, and Egypt in general, was that women were being denied their Islamic rights, and this denial was preventing Egypt from embracing modernization.[148] Although looked at as a key feminist thinker, the justifications for Amin's beliefs tended to be based on economic efficiency.[149]

The Egyptian upper class produced the first female feminists. Margot Badran explains, "Feminist discourse fist emerged in the writings of women of privilege and education who lived in the secluded world of the urban harem. Women gained new exposure through expanded education and widening contacts within the female world."[150] One example of an early female leader, Bahithat al Badiya (a pen name meaning "Searcher in the Desert") published essays and speeches in the early twentieth century. In 1911, she sent demands to the Egyptian Congress that would later form the basic platform of the Egyptian feminist movement; she demanded that women be granted greater education, more access to employment opportunities, and the right to worship in

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[145] Nagwa Megahed and Stephen Lack, "Colonial Legacy, Women's Rights and Gender—Educational Inequality in the Arab World with Particular Reference to Egypt and Tunisia," *International Review of Education* 57, no. 3/4 (2011): 405-6, JSTOR (41480123).

[146] Marilyn Booth, "Women in Islam: Men and the 'Women's Press' in turn-of-the-20th-century Egypt," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 2 (May 2001): 189, Proquest (60580333).

[147] Cole, "Feminism," 392.

[148] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 21.

[149] Cole, "Feminism, Class," 393; Badran, "Competing Agendas," 204-5.

[150] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 203.

mosques.[151] Although men pushed for unveiling, early female activists pushed for equality in the public sphere first; as women ventured into public space, the veil would protect them from aggressive behavior.[152]

2. The Nationalist Movement

Nationalist leaders embraced women into their ranks in order to amass a greater support base, and as a result women had their first opportunity to participate publically in a social movement.[153] As militants in the nationalist struggle, women learned valuable social mobilization skills.[154] As a result, "women's feminism [became] more explicit and was increasingly expressed within a nationalist idiom reflecting and fuelling the growing nationalist moment in Egypt."[155] The movement brought together women from all social classes. Upper class women organized protest participation through the harems, and their presence inspired lower class women to come to the streets.[156]

The nationalist movement was happy to use the talents of women for its cause; however, its leaders never fully embraced the idea of gender equality as a core concept for the new nation. They saw the use of women as a way to inspire men to action, but they viewed women as symbols of their culture and not necessarily a part of the nation they were trying to create.[157] Marilyn Booth states, "men's writings on the woman question had to do not so much with the life-conditions of real women as with competing nationalist ideologies that presume a nation maintained by a male leadership."[158]

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[151] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 22; Badran, "Competing Agendas," 205.

[152] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 205-6.

[153] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 23.

[154] Ibid., 229.

[155] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 205.

[156] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 22.

[157] Al-Ali, *Secularism,* 45.

[158] Booth, "Women in Islam," 173.

3. Politics, Freedom of Expression, and Education

Women did not achieve many gains in political expression during the early twentieth century. The political and religious authorities both approached women with a patriarchal lens. There was some room for female independent thought and organization, but women were alternatively suppressed or encouraged depending on if their view matched the government's view.[159] Women, however, did begin to find their voice through journalism and salon debates during this time period.[160]

The nationalist movement inspired a call for increased education for women. As a British colony, Egyptian educational opportunities were limited. The British colonial government provided just enough school positions to satisfy their need for qualified civil servants, but limited the number of educational opportunities in order to avoid having an excess of disaffected intellectuals.[161] Due to these limited opportunities, men did not want to compete against women.[162] Nationalists, however, seized limits on education as a core issue and added it to their platform.[163] As more educational opportunities became available, women had better tools to understand their religion and to question restrictions placed on them that were more cultural than Islamic.[164]

4. Capitalism and Society

One negative aspect of modernity was that the massive cultural and economic changes it brought inspired some to grasp onto traditional practices, even if these practices did not have firm Islamic roots. Early feminists called for ending practices that mostly affected the upper class. In 1899, it is estimated that only ten percent of women wore the veil and just .1 percent were secluded.[165] Modernity and capitalism, however,

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[159] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 202.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Cole, "Feminism, Class," 401.

[162] Ibid.

[163] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial Legacy," 405.

[164] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 203.

[165] Cole, "Feminism, Class," 393.

resulted in an increase in seclusion practices.[166] Since new economic opportunities meant the family no longer needed female labor in tax-farming or family-run small businesses, this rising class could afford the upper-class practices of seclusion and veiling and wanted to adopt the traditions.[167] With the changing economy also came challenges to women's inheritance; activists sought to guarantee this Koran-specified right.[168]

Even as the Egyptian government advocated for more women to join the workforce, they did not change personal status laws. This "created an awkward dichotomy between [a woman's] role as citizens of the nation state (*watan*) and as members of the religious community (*umma*.)"[169] Men feared the loss of their own masculinity, loss of their culture and way of life, and economic challenges from women. Changes to women's status could potentially threaten men's status and identity.[170] Although some men embraced opportunities under capitalism, there was an underlying fear that there was a larger loss in traditional culture and values taking place.[171]

B. THE RISE OF ISLAMIC FEMINISM: POST-INDEPENDENCE, 1952 REVOLUTION, AND PRESIDENT NASSER

Women's involvement in the nationalist movement did not result in a cache of new opportunities. After independence in 1922, "women had a rude awakening when it became clear that liberal men were not prepared to implement their promise to integrate women into the public life . . . Feminists became openly militant while most men who had been pro-feminist nationalists . . . grew silent as their attention turned [toward] their new political careers."[172] Priorities for women's groups became increasing educational opportunities, finding employment options, and changing personal status laws.[173]

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[166] Cole, "Feminism, Class," 390.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 201.

[170] Booth, "Women in Islam," 178.

[171] Al-Ali, *Secularism,* 45.

[172] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 207.

[173] Ibid., 208.

Furthermore, after independence, the women's movement began to split into different factions with different notions of what constituted women's empowerment; however, all factions faced difficulties after the 1952 Revolution and the rise of President Gamal Abdel Nasser.

1.   Competing factions

Although Islam was used by all, the women's movement had two primary wings—a secular (nationalist) wing and an Islamist wing.[174] Each wing focused on a slightly different set of grievances; however, both the secular and Islamist groups based their ideas and demands off of Islam. This shows a fundamental difference between the concepts of feminism in the West, which is typically divorced from religion, and in Egypt.[175] Furthermore, the women's movement gained a socialist and communist wing in the 1940s. Adherents of leftist organizations saw women's liberation as part of a greater goal of liberating the poor labor force from capitalism.[176]   The Islamic feminism movement was relatively short lived. After the 1952 revolution, many of the well-known women's groups were banned. President Nasser instigated the demobilization of the movement through a mixture of accepting some of the reforms women advocated for and then repressing most private organizations, including feminist groups.[177]

a.   The Secular Faction and the EFU

Calling one wing of the Islamic feminist movement "secular" is a bit of misnomer, since their goals were tied to Islam. Secular feminists tended to focus on "revisions of Muslim personal status codes, complementary roles and responsibilities in the family, [and] insisting . . . that men honor their duties."[178] They wanted to see greater

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[174] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 4.

[175] Ibid., 2.

[176] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 212.

[177] Al-Ali, *Secularism,* 66-8.

[178] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 4.

equality in the public sphere but believed in complementary roles between men and women in the private sphere.[179]

One of the first women's groups, the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU), was created by Huda Sha'rawi in 1923.[180] Originally active in the nationalist struggle, Sha'rawi mobilized women to protest against the British colonial force.[181] The failure of the nationalist movement to incorporate women's demands after taking power directly resulted in the founding of the EFU. When, after independence, women were denied suffrage and were barred from Parliament, Sha'rawi organized a female demonstration to Parliament t to protest.[182] Members of the EFU and other secular organizations mostly came from wealthy landowning families and had either a European education or access to European thoughts and ideas.[183] This demographic is exemplified by the first journal published by the EFU, *L'Egyptienne*, being written in French instead of Arabic.[184] The demographics of the movement would come to be criticized and aid detractors in framing the feminists as Western; however, following World War II, the movement eventually grew to include some middle class women.[185]

b. The Islamist Faction and the MWA

While both factions in the women's movement saw Islam as compatible with feminism, the fundamentalist wing used only Islam and dismissed other ideologies.[186] One of the main leaders of this branch of the women's movement was Zaynab al-Ghazali. Roxanne Euben and Mohammed Qasim Zaman stated that "if Hasan al-Banna is the

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[179] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 3.

[180] Ibid., 24.

[181] "Huda Shaarawi," Postcolonial Studies @ Emory, Emory University, accessed June 17, 2014, http://postcolonialstudies.emory.edu/huda-shaarawi/.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 142; Cole, "Feminism, Class," 392.

[184] Badran, *Feminism in Islam,* 26.

[185] Ibid.*,* 29.

[186] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 210.

father of the contemporary Islamist movement, Zaynab al-Ghazali is perhaps best characterized as its largely unsung mother."[187]

Zaynab al-Ghazali founded the Muslim Women's Association (MWA) when she was eighteen after splitting with the EFU. The main reason al-Ghazali left the EFU was that she disagreed with their platform that espoused a need for women's liberation; for al-Ghazali, women did not need to be liberated because Islamic law gave them all of their rights.[188] She stated, "[Islam] gave women everything—freedom, economic rights, political rights, social rights, public and private rights… Women may talk of liberation in Christian society, Jewish society, or pagan society, but in Islamic society it is a grave error to speak of the liberation of women."[189] Al-Ghazali advocated for traditional gender roles. She believed in equality in religion but complementary public and private roles.[190] The primary goal of the MWA was to educate women to be knowledgeable of all their Islamic rights. It also had various social outreaches such as an orphanage, programs to help the poor, services to help the unemployed find work, and counselors to mediate marital disputes.[191]

2. Political Opportunities

Women were keen to keep their political contributions to the nationalist cause in the minds of the public after independence. They used their past history in the nationalist movement as a way to give agency to their cause. By "stressing the close link between the beginning of the women's movement and 'the nationalist view,' many activists allude[d] to an attitude, in which *tahrir al-mar'a* (women's liberation) is part of anti-

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[187] Roxanne L Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., "Chapter 11: Zaynab al-Ghazali," in *Princeton Readings in Islamist thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 275.

[188] Ibid., 276.

[189] Roxanne L Euben and Muhammad Qasim Zaman, eds., "An Islamist Activist," in *Princeton Readings in Islamist thought: Texts and Contexts from al-Banna to Bin Laden,* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 284.

[190] Euben and Zaman, "Chapter 11: Zaynab al-Ghazali," 279.

[191] Euben and Zaman, "Chapter 11: Zaynab al-Ghazali," 276; Euben and Zaman, "An Islamist Activist," 284.

colonial and anti-imperialist struggle."[192] This link to the nationalist movement would prove useful in justifying the women's demands and defending their position against claims that women's rights organizations were Western.[193]

The Islamic feminist movement had some success in gaining expanded rights, but after the 1952 Revolution, political movements were routinely repressed.[194] Women, although granted some political rights under the new regime, were not immune to the oppression. As Margot Badran explains, "In 1956, the same year that the state granted women the right to vote, it paradoxically started to ban feminist organizations and to suppress public expression of feminist views, completing its task by 1959."[195] The Islamist faction of the movement escaped the first ban, but by 1964 the MWA and the Muslim Sisters, the women's branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, were banned.[196] Like many political activists, Zaynab al-Ghazali's price for her activism was a jail sentence, served from 1965–1971.[197] In her prison memoirs, al-Ghazali detailed the gruesome physical and psychological torture inflicted on her. She survived being beaten multiple times, being attacked by dogs, being forced to watch others be tortured in front of her, and being submerged in a pool of water for days.[198]

3.   Employment and Education

Post-independence, women had some success in gaining educational and employment opportunities; however, the most progress came in education and medicine, which "were fields in which women professionals typically served the needs of other women and thus their new work also perpetuated gender segregation in public space."[199]

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[192] Al-Ali, *Secularism*, 48.

[193] Ibid., 50.

[194] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 215.

[195] Ibid., 217.

[196] Ibid.

[197] Euben and Zaman, "Chapter 11: Zaynab al-Ghazali," 277.

[198] Zaynab al-Ghazali, *Return of the Pharaoh: Memoir in Nasir's Prison*, trans. Mokrane Guezzou (1994; The Islamic Foundation, 2006), 48-53, 61, 92-3, http://www.scribd.com/doc/18540888/Return-of-the-Pharaoh-Memoirs-in-Nasirs-Prison.

[199] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 208.

Even though some in the religious community fought against female employment, other supported and advocated for it. For example, Zaynab al-Ghazali saw women's education as essential and allowed for some circumstances in which a woman could work outside the home and participate in public life. Al-Ghazali believed that marriage and raising a family were the primary roles for women;[200] however, she saw that the only way that a woman could properly raise her children was for that woman to be educated herself in the realms of Islam, world politics, culture, and science.[201]

Although the 1952 revolution resulted in political repression, it greatly increased educational and employment opportunities for women. By the time the 1962 Charter was released by the regime, the Egyptian government was focused on growing the economy. One way they planned to accomplish this was by increasing the size of their educated work force, to include women.[202] The 1962 Charter guaranteed equality for all Egyptians, male and female, which translated to higher education and a guaranteed job. Furthermore, due to state sponsored incentives, women started to study science, math and engineering subjects.[203] The 1962 Charter, however, inspired a backlash from the religious elite. They emphasized women's traditional roles and believed "that women's economic independence would reduce their need and desire to remain dependent upon men."[204]

4.   Societal Pressures and Family Law

While women framed the feminist movement as being based in Islam, they fought against detractors who saw the movement as Western. One way women showed their commitment to Islam was through the wearing of the hijab. Some female activists felt the veil enabled freedom of movement in the public sphere.[205] Women in the Islamist

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[200] Euben and Zaman, "Chapter 11: Zaynab al-Ghazali," 279.

[201] Mervat F. Hatem, "Egyptian Discourses on Gender and Political Liberalization: Do Secularist and Islamist Views Really Differ?" *Middle East Journal* 48, no. 4 (Autumn 1994): 673, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4328746; Euben and Zaman, "An Islamist Activist," 285-6.

[202] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 218.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid., 219.

[205] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 149.

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movements, in particular, stayed dedicated to veiling: "Islamist women insist[ed] upon public identification of themselves as committed Muslims, with the hijab or, less frequently, the *niqab* being the most obvious sign of their commitment."[206]

Women had some success working with religious leaders on social issues such as limiting alcohol and prostitution, but they faced considerable opposition from those same leaders on expanding women's rights.[207] Shortly before the 1952 Revolution, the *ulemma* "held a conference to examine all aspects of women's status within the context of Islamic law . . . [and] attacked the feminist movement, claiming it was influenced and supported by British imperialists, and saying that 'colonialism had encouraged women to go out in order to destroy Islamic society.'"[208] The women's movement's greatest challenge was changing personal status laws. Given public opinion and the risk of backlash from the religious authorities, political leaders initially felt they did not have the power to make drastic changes.[209]

C.   PRESIDENTS SADAT AND MUBARAK

President Nasser's successor, Anwar al-Sadat, made changes that affected all of Egyptian society. He embraced "open door" capitalism and rising religious fervor.[210] Women experienced an increase in economic opportunities under Sadat and his successor, Hosni Mubarak, but they also faced inconsistency in personal status laws and political freedoms.

Religious fundamentalism and outward expressions initially increased under Sadat. The 1970s saw a rise in veiling among women. Islamic groups became popular among poor and middle class female university students, especially those studying medicine and science.[211] Women turned towards Islamist organizations because they felt

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[206] Badran, *Feminism in Islam*, 145.

[207] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 208-9.

[208] Ibid., 214.

[209] Ibid., 211.

[210] Ibid., 222.

[211] Ibid., 223.

undervalued and felt they lacked other options.[212] When Egypt succeeded in the 1973 war, religious fundamentalist leaders felt vindicated; they saw the victory as a reward for the Egyptian people returning to Islam. Even so, Sadat had a mixed relationship with Islamic groups throughout his regime, and a Muslim fundamentalist eventually assassinated him.[213]

President Hosni Mubarak also had a mixed record with Islamist groups. The Muslim Brotherhood, repressed periodically since its inception, began to gain traction in Parliament.[214] In the 2005 legislative election, the Muslim Brotherhood won its highest percentage of the vote ever, with Brotherhood candidates—running as independents— taking 88 of the 454 seats.[215] Mubarak reacted harshly and detained hundreds of Muslim Brotherhood members and changed the constitution in order to prevent another Muslim Brotherhood electoral victory.[216]

1.   Education and Employment

The one aspect of women's empowerment that Egyptian regimes and Muslim religious leaders seemed to agree was education; "Islamists have not produced a backlash against female education due to the fact that Islam stresses education, including religious education, for both men and women."[217] Furthermore, Brandt and Kaplan state, "Islamist groups . . . while confronting the government, rely upon educated, activist women as part

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[212] Marilyn Booth, "Development, Change, & Gender in Cairo: A View from the Household," review of *Development, Change, and Gender in Cairo: A View from the Household (Indiana Series in Arab and Islamic Studies),* ed. by Homa Hoodfar and Diane Singerman, *Resources for Feminist Research* 26.3, no. 4 (1998): 252-4, Proquest (194881042).

[213] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 222-5.

[214] "Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood," *BBC News: Middle East*, December 25, 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-12313405.

[215] "Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood"; Daniel Williams, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood May Be Model for Islam's Political Adaptation," *The Washington Post*, February 3, 2006, sec. A.14, Proquest (410085844).

[216] "Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood."

[217] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial Legacy," 407.

of their movements."[218] Female primary and secondary school enrollment increased from 88 percent to 90 percent from 2002 to 2005.[219]

Economic policy changes affected education. Instead of focusing the economy on state businesses and guaranteeing all citizens employment, the Sadat regime opened Egypt to foreign investment and promoted private business. With the loss of guaranteed jobs, women were encouraged to stay out of the work force in order to not compete with men.[220] Even so, economic opportunities in the Gulf region increased, and men eventually sought work in the Gulf reopening the Egyptian labor market to women. The rise in the wear of the veil can be linked to this change; it "has been connected in part with women's need to work and their wish at the same time to protect themselves from exposure to male harassment. This security however is sought at the price of engaging in passive rather than active resistance to male intimidation."[221]

Economic policy under Mubarak further affected women's employment. Studies in Cairo in the 1980s and 1990s showed that "as private sector wages have far outstripped public sector salaries, boys are tending to leave school earlier in [favor] of private sector employment or vocational training, leaving more family income for girls to continue their schooling and aspire to [lower paid] government positions."[222] Furthermore, males that immigrated to the Gulf brought back higher wages then what women could earn in Egypt. Although more women were working, their husbands' higher salaries reinforced that they were not meant to be the primary wage earners: women's work was considered help instead of actual work.[223]

Although literacy rates and educational enrollment increased under President Mubarak, a gender gap existed between men and women. In 2005, while men's illiteracy

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[218] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial legacy," 407.

[219] Ibid.

[220] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 224.

[221] Ibid.

[222] Booth, "Development, change, & gender," 252-4.

[223] Ibid.

rate was 18.3 percent, women's was 43.8 percent.[224] Furthermore, women were not enrolling in science and engineering fields of study. In 2006–2007, women made up 28 percent of the engineering students, but they constituted 73 percent of art students.[225] Employment opportunities still lacked as well. In 2008, 20 percent of women were unemployed in comparison to six percent of men.[226]

2. Political Opportunities, Family Law, and Societal Position

The Sadat and Mubarak regimes increased political opportunities for women. The Sadat regime enacted a law requiring 30 seats in Parliament to go to women.[227] President Mubarak also appointed the first female judge in 2003.[228] The Muslim Brotherhood's increased prominence, however, raised concerns for female political opportunities. In 2007, the Brotherhood published a party program outlining political changes it wished to see eventually enacted.[229] The program deemed women, as well as the Coptic Christian minority, ineligible to be the head of the state.[230] Furthermore, women were "placed . . . under a special section entitled 'Issues and Problems.'"[231]

President Sadat and President Mubarak made changes for and against women in terms of family law. In a vein similar to Sadat's early years, Mubarak sought to gain favor from the religious elite with these changes. In many ways, Islam's last place to hold control was family law: "Islam, in modern Egypt, has been controlled by the state. The Islamic establishment has had to negotiate with and accommodate to the secular state. The last bastion of official Islam has been the regulation of family life."[232]

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[224] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial Legacy," 409-10.

[225] Ibid., 413.

[226] Ibid.

[227] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 224.

[228] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial Legacy," 407.

[229] "Arabic Paper Views Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Party Program as 'Retrograde' Step," *BBC Monitoring Middle East*, September 29, 2007, Proquest (459097511).

[230] Ibid.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 228.

Sadat's regime initially supported religious fundamentalist positions as a way to appease politically powerful religious leaders. For example, the 1971 Constitution dictated a difference in a woman's public and private roles.[233] Sadat would later change his position toward women's reforms. In 1979, by Presidential decree, President Sadat implemented changes in personal status laws that gave women more rights in family law matters. President Mubarak repealed the law in 1985 under pressure from Islamists.[234] This led, however, to a feminist collective action that resulted in a law being passed that restored the majority of the 1979 decree.[235] Mubarak granted further rights in 2005; women were granted expanded divorce rights, but a call for easing of restrictions on travel was unsuccessful.[236]

D.   SINCE THE ARAB SPRING IN 2011

In the last four years Egypt has seen a great amount of turmoil and a rise in women's activism. Women played an integral role in managing the logistics of the Arab Spring movement in Tahrir Square.[237] President Mubarak's overthrow in February 2011,[238] however, did not translate into an increase in rights for women.

After Mubarak's fall, there was a period of transition that ended with Mohammed Morsi, a politician from the Muslim Brotherhood, being democratically elected in 2012.[239] By May 2013, the majority of Egyptians had lost hope and did not agree with the Muslim Brotherhood-run government's policies and actions.[240] In July 2013, although democratically elected, the Morsi presidency faced serious public opposition and demonstrations. The Egyptian army disposed of Morsi and quickly installed a

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[233] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 222.

[234] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial Legacy," 406.

[235] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 224-5.

[236] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial Legacy," 407.

[237] Xan Rice et al., "Women Have Emerged as Key Players in the Arab Spring," *The Guardian*, April 22, 2011, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/apr/22/women-arab-spring.

[238] "Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood."

[239] Ibid.

[240] "Egyptian Attitudes: September 2013," Zagby Research Services, last modified September, 2013, 3, http://www.zogbyresearchservices.com/egyptian-attitudes-2013/.

civilian head of government to avoid the appearance of a coup. Even though the new president, Adly Mansour, "vowed to include all sections of society, including Islamists, in an interim coalition government," the Army issued arrest warrants for leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood.[241] A year later, former field marshal Abdel Fatah al-Sisi was elected.[242] Throughout the turmoil, women faced various challenges.

After the 2011 revolution, the military council took steps that decreased political opportunities for women, and the Muslim Brotherhood-run government's actions further concerned feminist activists. Under Mubarak there had been a quota guaranteeing women a percentage of seats in Parliament. Although the ruling party had used the seats as a form a patronage, the cancellation of the quota drastically decreased the number of female lawmakers.[243] In the 2012 election, "female candidates won only about 1 percent of the seats . . . and some of the conservative Islamist parties that [gained political agency] support gender segregation and emphasize that women's primary role should be as homemakers."[244] When Mohammed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood took power in 2012, they drafted and passed a new constitution.[245] Concern for the rights of women plagued the constitution from the start. In July 2013, after Morsi's overthrow, the military suspended the constitution.[246]

The Arab Spring did not slow down the increase in women's enrollment in higher education, but education does not necessarily reflect gains in other aspects of life. As of

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[241] William Booth, Abigail Hauslohner, and Michael Birnbaum, "Egypt Orders Arrests of Muslim Brotherhood Leaders as Interim President Takes Office: A Year After Becoming Egypt's First Democratically Elected Leader, Morsi's Aides Say He is under House Arrest," *The Washington Post*, July 5, 2013, Proquest (1398010896).

[242] Patrick Kingsley, "Abdel Fatah al-Sisi Won 96.1% of Vote in Egypt Presidential Election, Says Officials," *The Guardian*, June 3, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/03/abdel-fatah-al-sisi-presidential-election-vote-egypt

[243] Zvi Bar'el, "For Egypt's Women, the Arab Spring does not spell freedom," *Haaretz*, April 18, 2012, http://www.haaretz.com/news/features/for-egypt-s-women-the-arab-spring-does-not-spell-freedom-1.424962.

[244] Ursula Lindsey, "Arab Women Make Inroads in Higher Education but Often Find Dead Ends," *The Chronicle of Higher Education,* January 29, 2012, Proquest (919431788).

[245] Profile: Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood."

[246] Booth, "Egypt Orders Arrests."

2012, 56 percent of university students were women.[247] Although there were a large number of women attending universities, there were very few female faculty members, and female-focused subject areas were still rare.[248] Furthermore, women continued to gravitate toward literature and social sciences instead of science and technology for fields of study; these subject areas continue to offer fewer employment opportunities.[249] Furthermore, women still are pressured to forgo a career for marriage.[250]

E.   CONCLUSION

Although Egypt was the birthplace of the original Islamic feminist movement in the early twentieth century, its record on women's rights and freedoms in civil society is mixed. While secular and Islamist leaders tended to promote education, they clashed over women's rights to employment and possible changes in personal status laws. The Islamic frame of various women's movements as well as women's activism during the nationalist movement and the Arab Spring has granted women some agency in Egypt. Even so, women face an uphill battle against the patriarchal society, even if the government is devoid of Islamist politics, in order to become full members of the civil society.

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[247] Lindsey, "Arab Women Make Inroads."

[248] Ibid.

[249] Ibid.

[250] Ibid.

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IV. IMPORTANCE OF ISLAMISM AND A WOMAN'S ROLE: STATISTICS AND PUBLIC OPINION

This chapter reviews Islamism and women's roles in Turkey and Egypt by focusing on select variables over the past 30 years. The rate of Islamism is measured in terms of electoral results and popular sentiment, while variables for women's role include political participation, educational opportunities, and employment data.

A. MEASURING ISLAMISM

This study measures rates of Islamism by reviewing electoral success and public opinion.

1. Elections

The electoral success of political Islamist parties is one indicator of rising rates of Islamism. Electoral success, however, cannot be seen as the sole measure of Islamist popularity due to previous and current (in the case of Egypt) restrictions on religious parties in Turkey and Egypt.[251] Figures 1 and 2 show the percentage of the vote won by Islamist parties over the past 22 years. Islamist parties in Turkey include precursor parties to the AK Party. For Egypt, the Islamist vote includes the Muslim Brotherhood's political arm, the Freedom and Justice Party, as well as Salafist parties and Muslim Brotherhood members that ran as independents in order to circumvent election laws.[252]

Figure 1 illustrates that while the AKP has steadily increased their percentage of the popular vote, they have lost some of their seats in Parliament. However, they still maintain a majority and currently run the Turkish government.[253] Table 1 illustrates that

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[251] "Republic of Turkey," Election Guide: Democracy Assistance & Elections News, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/218/; "Arab Republic of Egypt," Election Guide: Democracy Assistance & Elections News, International Foundation for Electoral Systems, accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.electionguide.org/countries/id/65/.

[252] Ibid.

[253] "Republic of Turkey."

while more Turks feel that religion has a large role in politics since the AK Party gained control, a significant portion of the population disagrees with that statement.[254]

Figure 2 displays the percentage of seats Islamists won in elections for the Egyptian People's Assembly since 2005 and the Advisory Council since 2011. The 2010 People's Assembly election was boycotted by the Muslim Brotherhood after early rounds of voting.[255]
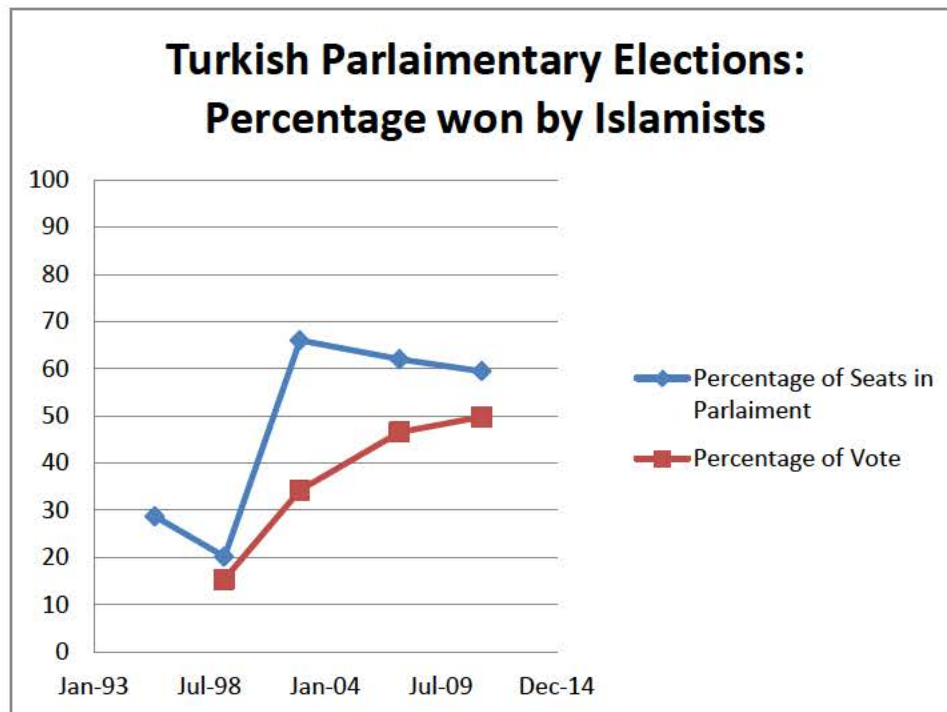

Turkish Parlaimentary Elections: Percentage won by Islamists

Figure 1.   Turkish Elections—Islamist Percentage[256]

[254] "Chapter 2. Muslim Opinion on Government and Social Issues," Pew Research Center, last modified on June 3, 2003, http://www.pewglobal.org/2003/06/03/chapter-2-muslim-opinion-on-government-and-social-issues/; Nicole Speulda and Mary McIntosh, "Global Gender Gaps," Pew Research Center, last modified May 13, 2004, http://www.people-press.org/2004/05/13/global-gender-gaps-2; "Chapter 3. Role of Islam in Politics," Pew Research Center, last modified July 10, 2012, http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/07/10/chapter-3-role-of-islam-in-politics; Richard C. Auxier, "Egypt, Democracy, and Islam," Pew Research Center, last modified January 31, 2011, http://www.pewresearch.org/2011/01/31/egypt-democracy-and-islam/.

[255] Amro Hassan, "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood to Boycott Parliamentary Elections Runoff," *Babylon & Beyond Blog*, December 1, 2010, http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/babylonbeyond/2010/12/egypt-muslim-brotherhood-to-boycott-parliamentary-elections-run-off.html;

[256] "Republic of Turkey."

Table 1. Turkish Opinion on the Role of Islam in Politics[257]

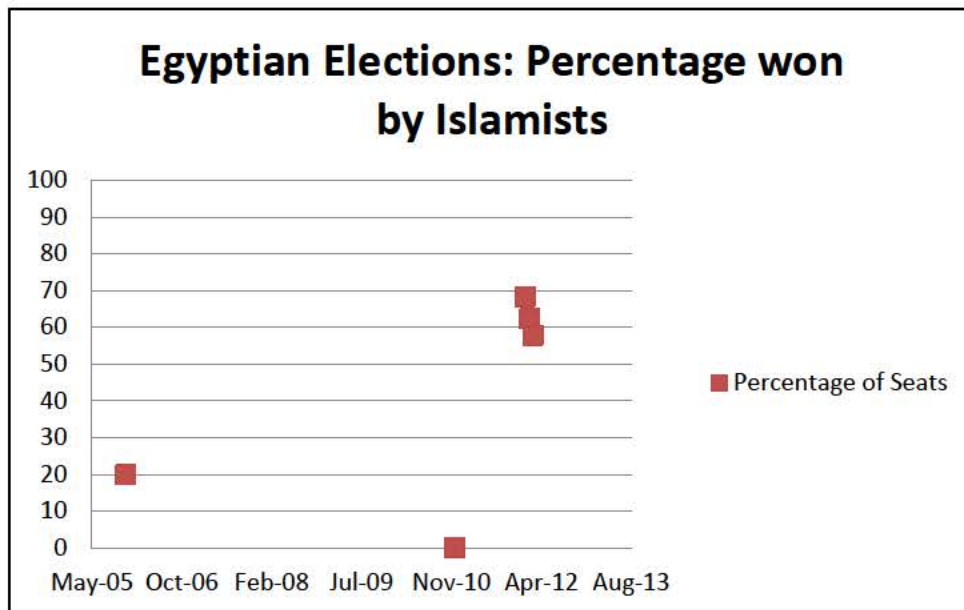| What is the Role of Islam in Political Life?	2003	2004	2005	2010	2012
Islam plays a large role	46%	45%	62%	69%	64%

Figure 2. Egyptian Elections—Islamists Percentage[258]

The data in Figure 2 does not illustrate the Muslim Brotherhood's popularity after the 2013 military takeover.[259] The Muslim Brotherhood's popularity decreased since the 2011 uprising, as shown by Figure 3. Although support for the Muslim Brotherhood was high after the 2011 Arab Spring Protests, it has since declined dramatically and now more Egyptians have an unfavorable view of the organization than a favorable one.[260]

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[257] "Chapter 2. Muslim Opinion on Government"; Speulda and McIntosh. "Global Gender Gaps"; "Chapter 3. Role of Islam in Politics"; Auxier, "Egypt, Democracy, and Islam."

[258] "Arab Republic of Egypt"; Hassan, "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood to Boycott"; Gamal Essam El-Din, "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Legislative Life Begins Amid Tension and Divisions," *Ahram Online*, January 23, 2012, http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/33/100/32384/Elections-/News/Egypts-postMubarak-legislative-life-begins-amid-te.aspx.

[259] "Arab Republic of Egypt."

[260] "Chapter 2. Egyptian Views of Leaders, Organizations, Institutions," Pew Research Center, last modified May 22, 2014, http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/05/22/chapter-2-egyptian-views-of-leaders-organizations-institutions/.
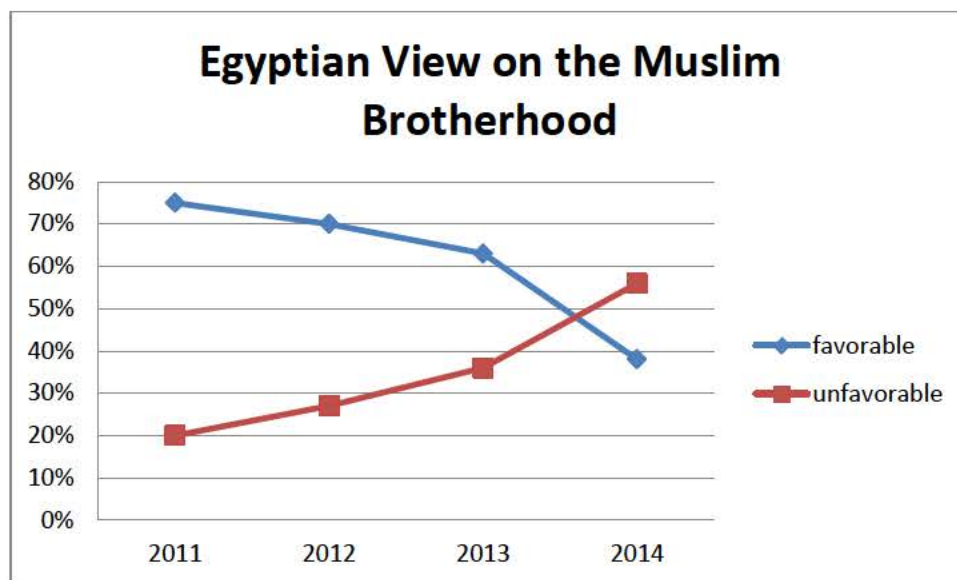
Figure 3.   Egyptian Views of the Muslim Brotherhood[261]

2.   Public Opinion

The growth of Islamism can be measured using other variables. One is public opinion concerning the importance of religion for the everyday person. As illustrated by Figures 4 and 5, over 80 percent of Turks and 90 percent of Egyptians value religion as very or rather important. The survey this data was extrapolated from, however, did not specify what religion was important.[262] Although Egypt and Turkey are majority Muslim countries, they do have religious minorities.

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[261] "Chapter 2. Egyptian Views of Leaders."

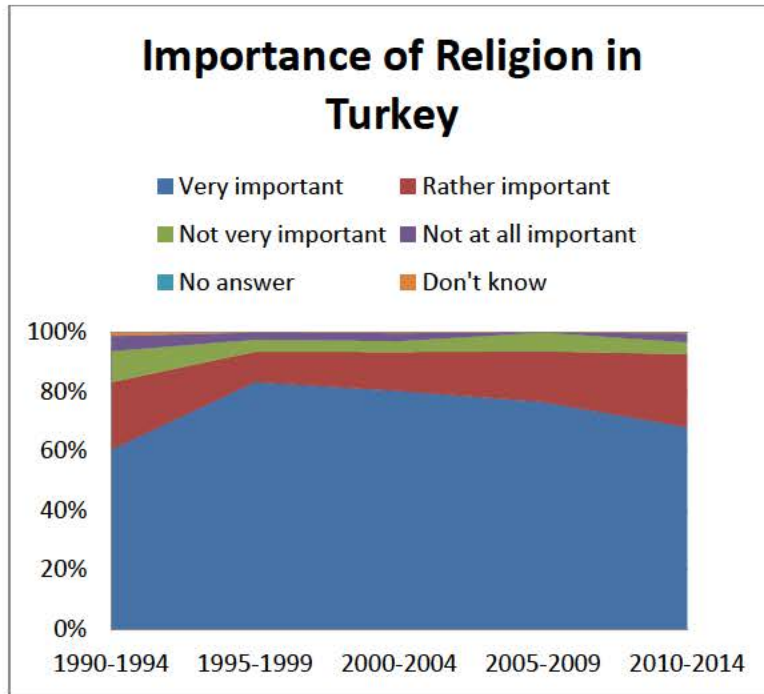[262] "Online Data Analysis," World Values Survey, accessed February 20, 2015, http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSOnline.jsp.

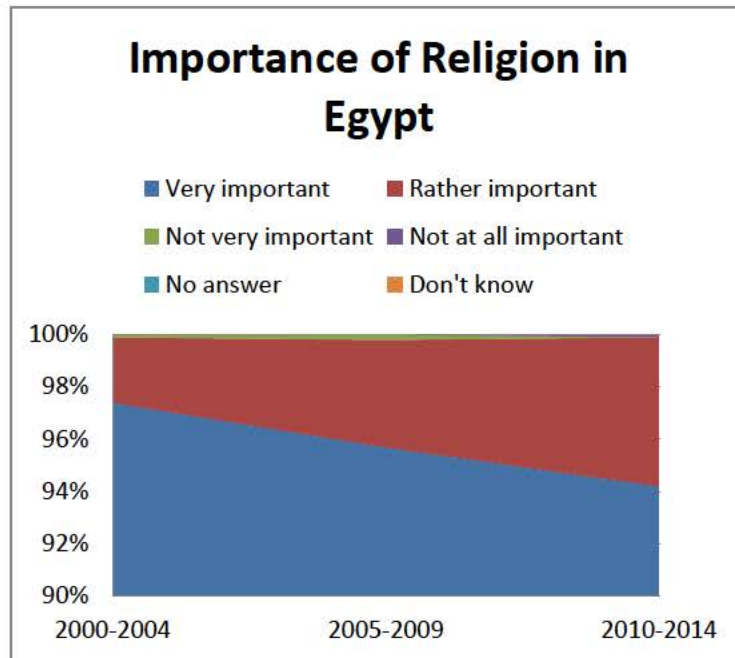Figure 4.   Importance of Religion in Turkey[263]

Figure 5.   Importance of Religion in Egypt[264]

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[263] "Online Data Analysis."

Feeling that religion is personally important does not necessarily translate to feeling that religion should have a central role in public life. For example, not all Egyptians and Turks feel Sharia law should be central to their legal systems.[265] A 2012 survey by the Pew Research center showed that while only 12 percent of Turkish respondents favored making sharia law the official law, 74 percent of Egyptians favored it.[266] The Egyptian opinion, however, has changed since the military takeover in 2013. As shown by Table 2, the majority of Egyptians now do not agree that laws should strictly follow the Koran. (The difference in the two surveys for 2012 in Egypt can be attributed to different interpretations of "Sharia Law" and "Laws that Strictly Follow the Koran.")

Table 2.   Egyptian Opinion on the Role of the Koran in Law[267]

Should laws strictly follow the Quran?	2011	2012	2013	2014
yes	62%	60%	58%	48%

B.   WOMEN'S ROLE IN CIVIL SOCIETY

For the purpose of this study, women's role in civil society is going to be measured through political, educational, and employment opportunities.

1.   Political Opportunity and Parliamentary Representation

As discussed in Chapters II and III, political opportunities for women in Egypt and Turkey have been inconsistent. Women gained the right to vote and hold office in

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[264] Ibid.

[265] "Chapter 2. Muslim Opinion on Government"; Speulda and McIntosh. "Global Gender Gaps"; "Chapter 1. Beliefs About Sharia," Pew Research Center, last modified April 30, 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-beliefs-about-sharia/; "Chapter 3. Role of Islam in Politics"; Auxier, "Egypt, Democracy, and Islam"; "Chapter 3. Democratic Values in Egypt," Pew Research Center, last modified May 22, 2014, http://www.pewglobal.org/2014/05/22/chapter-3-democratic-values-in-egypt.

[266] "Chapter 1. Beliefs About Sharia."

[267] "Chapter 3. Democratic Values in Egypt."

Turkey in 1934; however, forming independent political groups was difficult.[268] While the proportion of women in Turkish Parliament increased from one percent to 14.4 percent (as shown by Figure 6) over the past 20 years, Table 3 shows that public opinion still holds that men make better leaders than women. Furthermore, the proportion of women in Parliament, at 14.4 percent, is considerably smaller than the proportion of women in the entire population, which is 50.9 percent.[269]
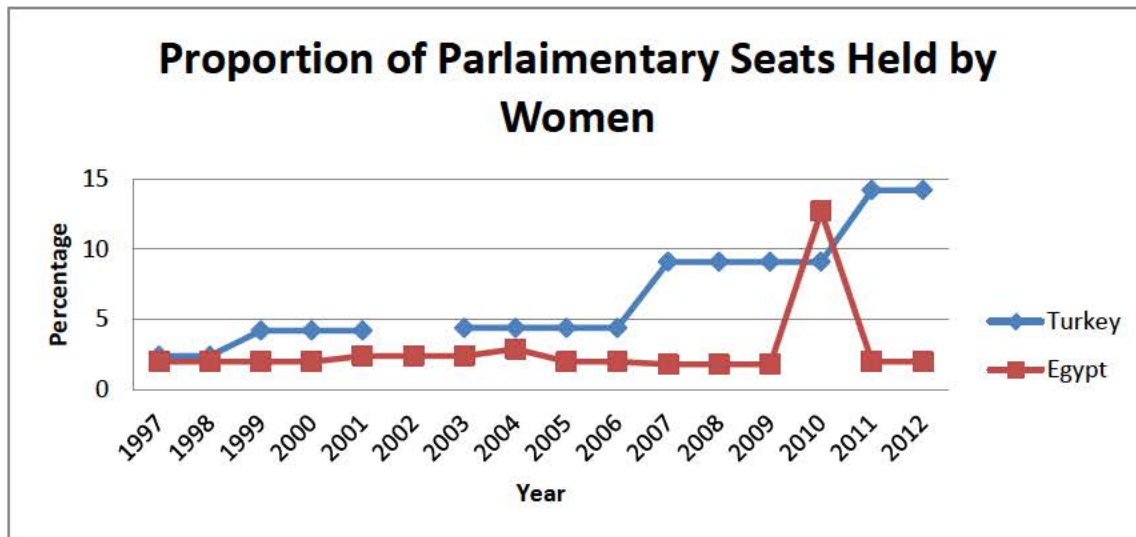

Figure 6.   Women in Parliament[270]

Table 3.   Opinion—Gender and Political Leadership[271]

Who makes better political leaders?	Turkey		Egypt	
	2007	2012	2007	2013
men	34%	52%	38%	42%
women	10%		15%	
equal	51%		43%	

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[268] Zurcher, *Turkey: A Modern History*, 177, 180; Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 23, 41.

[269] "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues," Pew Research Center, last modified October 4, 2007, http://www.pewglobal.org/2007/10/04/chapter-5-views-on-gender-issues/; "Chapter 4. Gender Equality," Pew Research Center, last modified July 10, 2012, http://www.pewglobal.org/2012/07/10/chapter-4-gender-equality/; "World DataBank," The World Bank, accessed February 20, 2015, http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx.

[270] "World DataBank."

[271] "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues"; "Chapter 4. Gender Equality."

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Egyptian women have faced similar circumstances as their Turkish counterparts. As discussed in Chapter III, while women gained the right to vote in 1956, most independent women's groups were banned by 1959.[272] As shown by Figure 6, the proportion of women in the Egyptian Parliament has held steady at about two percent since the 1990s, with the exception of 2010. The proportion of women in the Egyptian Parliament dropped from 12 percent to two percent after the 2011 uprising. As discussed in Chapter III, the Mubarak regime enacted a quota guaranteeing women a certain number of seats. After the Revolution, the quota was abolished.[273] As far as public opinion, the percentage of respondents to a Pew Survey believing men make better leaders than women increased between 2007 and 2012. As shown in Table 3, while the number of respondents that believe men are better leaders increased, it is still below 50 percent.[274]

2. Education: Literacy and Enrollment

Women have become more educated in Egypt and Turkey over the past forty years.[275] Literacy rates as well as rates of educational enrollment and completion have increased in both countries. This increase reflects the importance of education held by the population as reflected in public opinion polls.[276]

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate how primary and tertiary enrollment for women has increased since the 1970s. As a result, literacy rates have risen for young women (as shown in Figure 7).[277]

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[272] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 217.

[273] Bar'el, "For Egypt's Women."

[274] "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues"; "Chapter 4. Gender Equality."

[275] "World DataBank."

[276] "World DataBank"; "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues"; "Online Data Analysis."
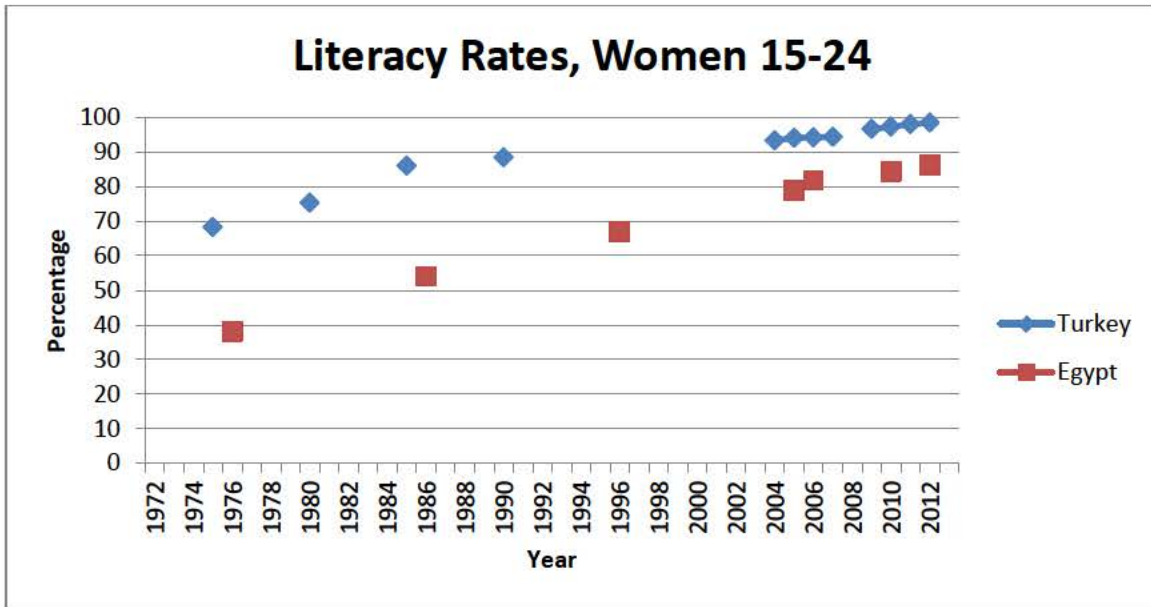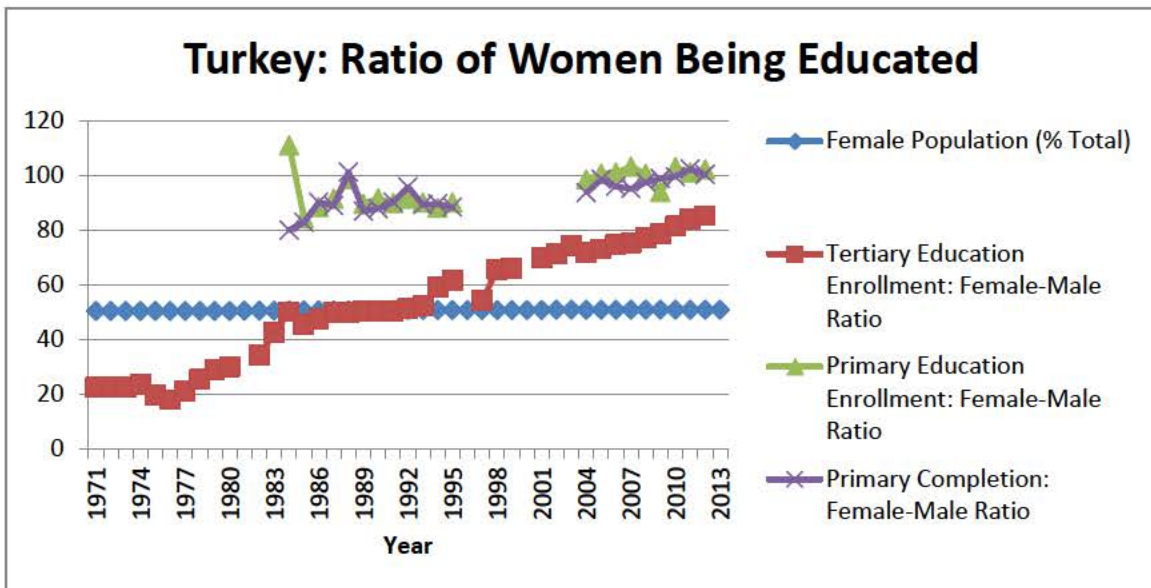
[277] "World DataBank."

Figure 7.   Literacy Rates[278]

Figure 8.   Educational Enrollment—Turkey[279]

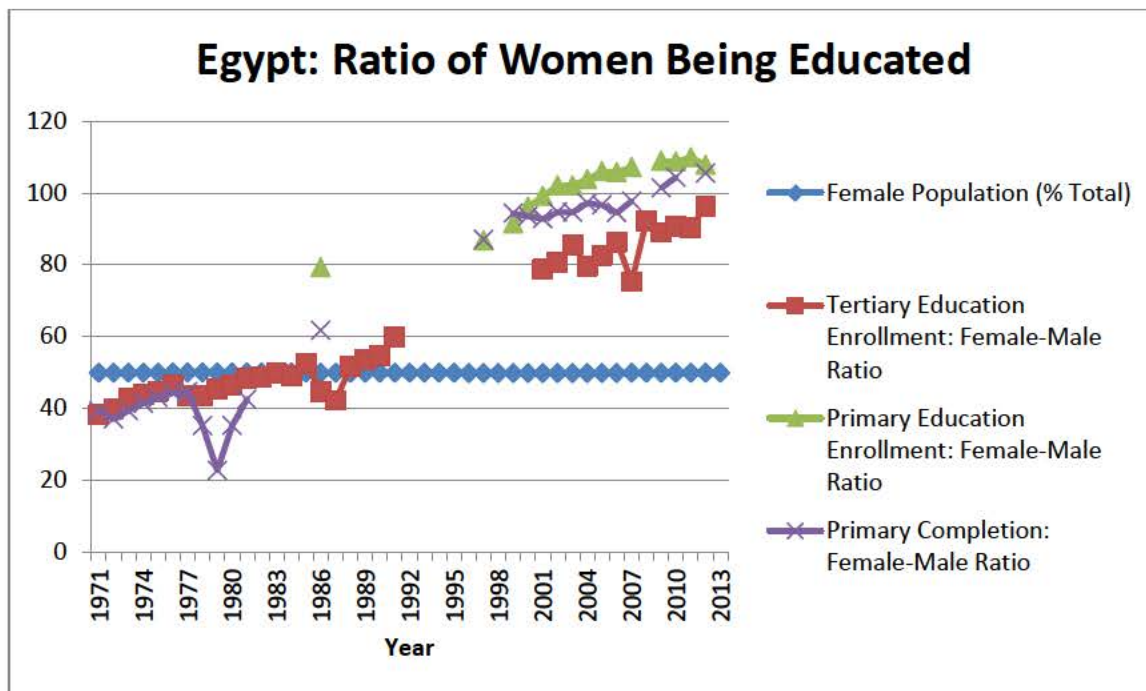
[278] "World DataBank."

[279] Ibid.

Figure 9.   Educational Enrollment—Egypt[280]

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate how women now outnumber men in the primary education systems. In 1971, there was approximately one woman per every five men in tertiary education in Turkey. By 2012 that number had risen to eight and a half women per every ten men. For primary education, in 2012, girls enrolled in greater numbers than boys. There were 10.2 girls for every ten boys.[281] Similar trends occurred in Egypt. Tertiary enrollment increased from slightly less than four women for every 10 men to over nine women per ten men. As of 2012, girls enrolled and completed primary school in higher numbers than boys in Egypt.[282]

Public opinion supports granting women and girls opportunities for education. Over the past ten years, surveys reported that Turkish public opinion felt that educating girls was as important as educating boys. In 2001, over 96 percent of those surveyed felt that educating women was somewhat to very important, and a 2007 survey showed that

[280] "World DataBank."

[281] Ibid.

[282] Ibid.

86 percent of respondents felt that educating women was of equal importance to educating men. The World Value Survey from 2010–2014 showed that over 65 percent of Turkish respondents disagreed that it was more important for a boy to receive a university education than a woman.[283] While not as high, a 2001 survey showed Egyptian respondents agreeing that it was somewhat to very important to educated girls. Furthermore, a 2007 survey showed that 73 percent of Egyptian respondents believed that educating girls was equal in importance to educating boys. The World Value 2010–2014 Survey results were similar for Egypt and Turkey: 63 percent of Egyptians disagreed that it was more important for boys to receive a university education.[284]

3. Women in the Workforce

Chapters II and III briefly reviewed initiatives aimed at getting women to work outside the home, and some of the obstacles women have faced. These chapters concluded that government policies and public opinion did not always align. While the governments of Turkey and Egypt tried to get women to join the workforce for economic reasons, some men feared that women joining the workforce would result in greater competition for scarce jobs or feared that it was harbinger of cultural decay.[285] This chapter focuses on employment statistics and recent public opinion polls.

Public opinion polls conducted over the past 15 years show support for women working outside the home but reflect the attitude that men should have priority for jobs.[286] Surveys in Turkey show that the majority of Turkish respondents (over 85 percent) believe that women have the right to work outside the home. However, the percentage dropped from 95 percent to 86 percent between 2010 and 2013. In contrast, the same surveys in Egypt resulted in a slimmer but more stable majority—61 percent in

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[283] "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues"; "Online Data Analysis."

[284] Ibid.

[285] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 30; Al-Ali, *Secularism,* 45; Badran, "Competing Agendas," 218-9.

[286] "Gender Equality Universally Embraced, But Inequalities Acknowledged," Pew Research Center, last modified July 1, 2013, http://www.pewglobal.org/2010/07/01/gender-equality; "Chapter 4. Gender Equality"; "Online Data Analysis."

2010 and 2013—of respondents believe women can work outside the home.[287] Table 4 illustrates that Turkish and Egyptian opinion is that men should have priority for scarce jobs.

Table 4.   Opinion—Gender and Access to Jobs[288]

Should men have priority for scare jobs?	2000-2004	2005-2009	2010-2014
Turkey-Agree	59.3%	52.1%	59.4%
Turkey-Disagree	28.4%	29.2%	23.1%
Egypt-Agree	89.6%	89.0%	83.4%
Egypt-Disagree	0.4%	4.3%	11.0%

Figure 10 displays female labor figures for Turkey over the past 15 years. While the participation rate has averaged slightly less than 30 percent, there was a small dip in participation from 2000 to 2008. Meanwhile, the percentage of women's jobs that are vulnerable has decreased steadily since the late 1990s.[289] Figure 11 illustrates that the trend in unemployment for women has followed the overall trend for unemployment in Turkey.[290]

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[287] "Gender Equality Universally Embraced"; "Chapter 4. Gender Equality."

[288] "Online Data Analysis."

[289] "World DataBank."
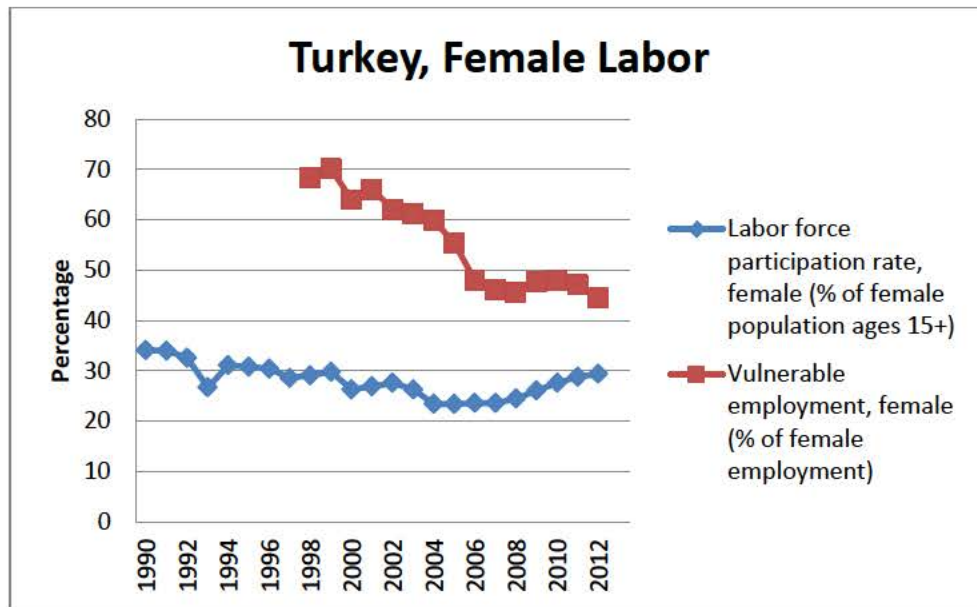
[290] Ibid.

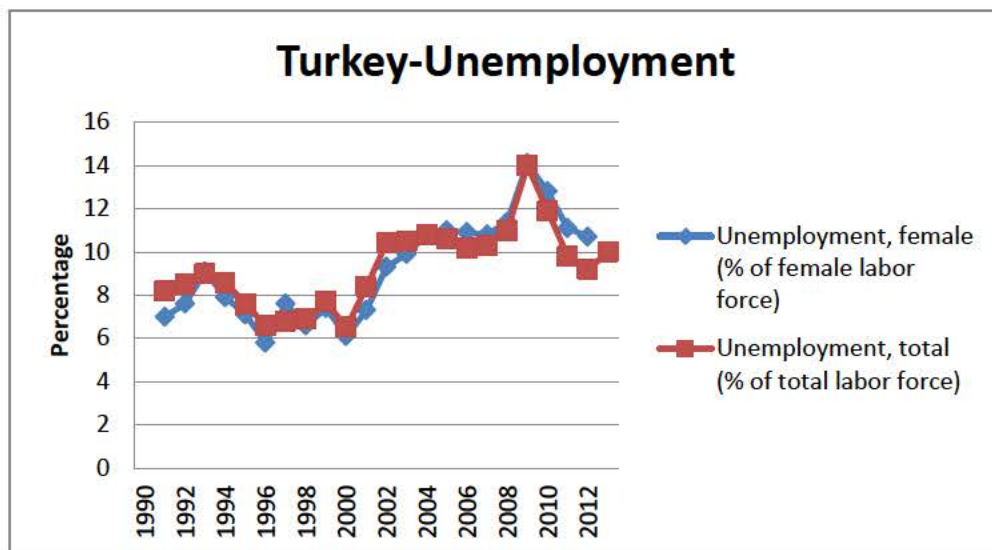Figure 10.   Female Labor Percentages—Turkey[291]

Figure 11.   Unemployment—Turkey[292]

[291] "World DataBank."

[292] Ibid.

Egypt, as shown in Figure 12, has different patterns for employment. As reported by the World Bank, unemployment has averaged around ten percent since 1992. Women's unemployment, however, has averaged 40 percent.[293] Data similar to what is displayed in Figure 10 was not readily available for Egypt.
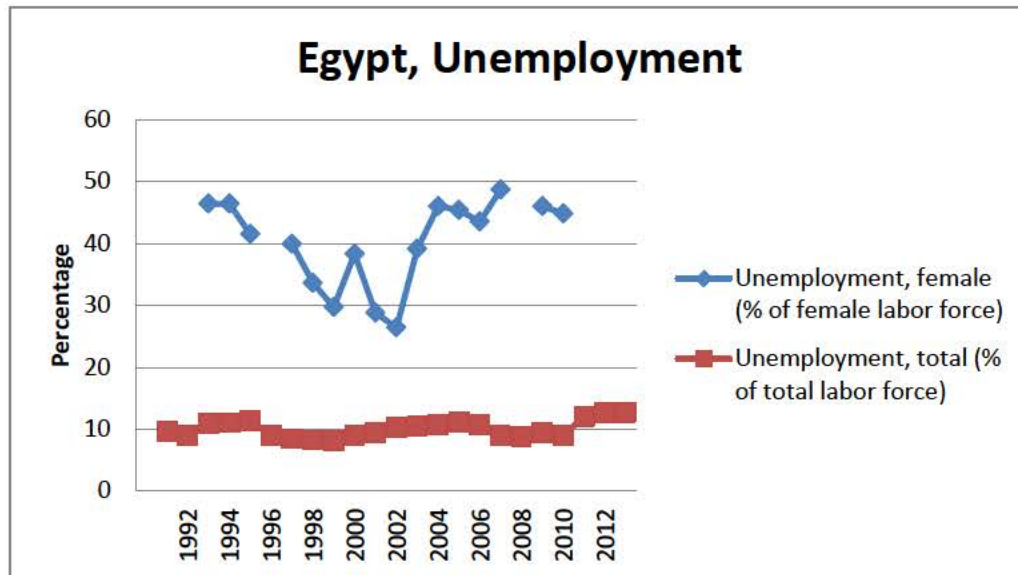

Figure 12.   Unemployment—Egypt[294]

4.   **What About the Veil?**

One issue of social standing that receives attention in the West is veiling. Table 5 illustrates that majorities in both Egypt and Turkey feel that women have a choice in whether or not they veil. In 2013, the percentage of Egyptians who agreed with that sentiment decreased to 46 percent: the Pew survey was concluded prior to the 2013 military takeover. The survey did not discuss the reasons for the decrease, so it cannot be ascertained if it was because of increased Islamism or because of a rejection of Islamism following the failure of the Muslim Brotherhood.[295]

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[293] "World DataBank."

[294] Ibid.

[295] "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues"; "Chapter 4: Women In Society," Pew Research Center, last modified April 30, 2013, http://www.pewforum.org/2013/04/30/the-worlds-muslims-religion-politics-society-women-in-society/: "Gender Equality Universally Embraced."

Table 5.   Public Opinion on the Veil[296]

Women can choose to veil or not (%)	2007	2010	2013
Egypt-agree	60%	51%	46%
Egypt-disagree	33%	48%	
Turkey-agree	93%	96%	90%
Turkey-disagree	5%	3%	

C.   CORRELATION VERSUS CAUSATION

Figure 13 displays how in Turkey the rise in the power of the political Islamism correlates minimally to an increase in the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women, as well as increased literacy; it also correlates to increased unemployment for women.[297] As discussed in section B.3, however, the increase in women's unemployment followed the national unemployment trends.[298]

Figure 14 illustrates similar data for Egypt that is illustrated in Figure 13 for Turkey. Although a correlation is shown between rising Islamist political success and the rise in the number of women in Parliament and increased literacy rates in Turkey, the correlation does not hold in Egypt.[299] Egyptian electoral laws and the boycott of the 2010 election by the Muslim Brotherhood make measuring Islamist sentiment through the variable of electoral success difficult. Furthermore, the increase in female representation in the People's Assembly in 2010 was due to an election quota.[300]

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[296] "Chapter 5. Views on Gender Issues"; "Chapter 4: Women In Society"; Pew Research Center, "Gender Equality Universally Embraced."

[297] "World DataBank"; "Republic of Turkey."

[298] "World DataBank."

[299] "World DataBank"; "Arab Republic of Egypt"; Hassan, "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood to Boycott"; Essam El-Din, "Egypt's Post-Mubarak Legislative."

[300] Hassan, "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood to boycott"; Bar'el, "For Egypt's women."
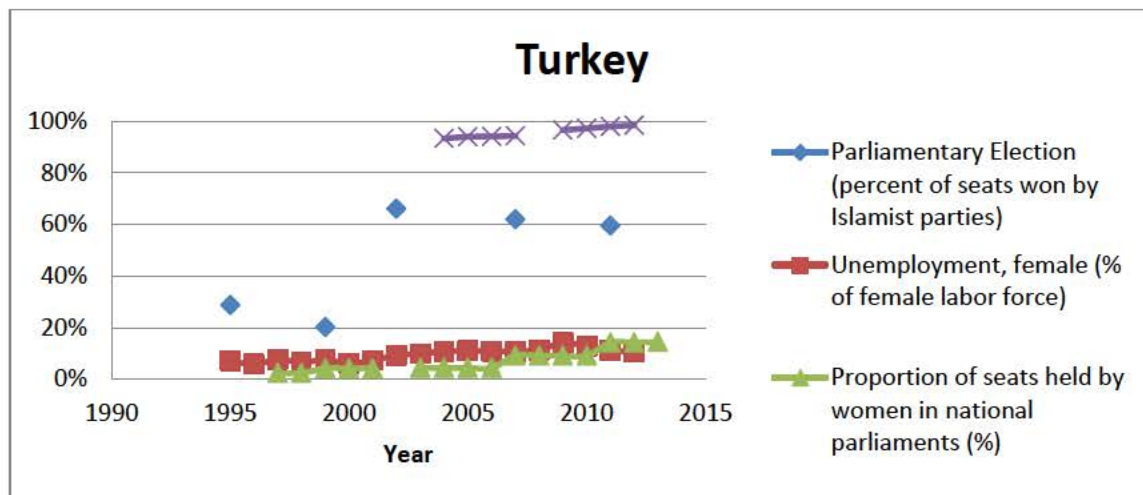
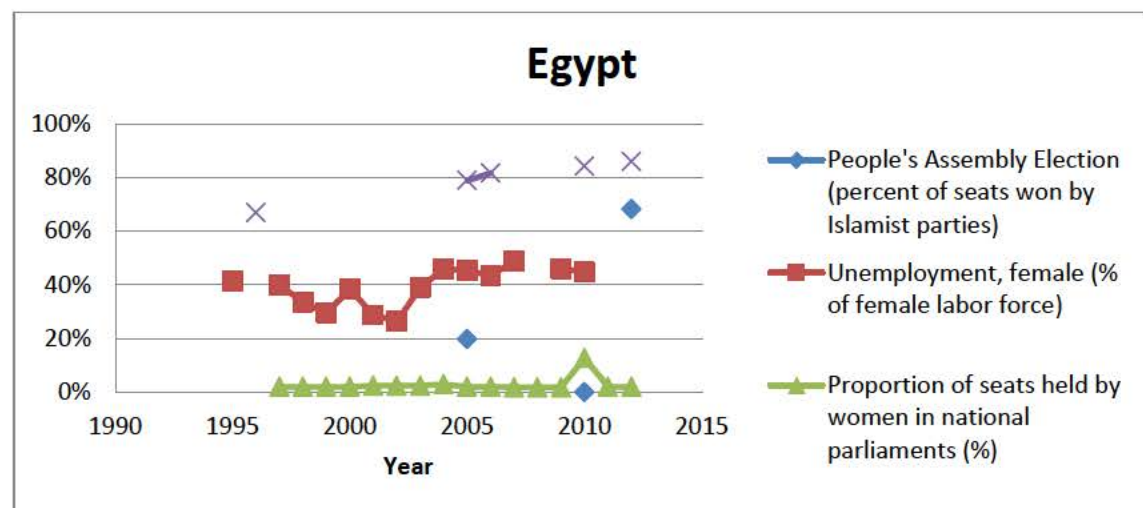Figure 13.   Turkey—Islamist Political Gains versus Women's Opportunities[301]

Figure 14.   Egypt—Islamist Political Gains versus Women's Opportunities[302]

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[301] "World DataBank"; "Republic of Turkey."

[302] "World DataBank"; "Arab Republic of Egypt"; Hassan, "Egypt: Muslim Brotherhood to boycott"; Essam El-Din, "Egypt's post-Mubarak legislative."

While increased Islamist political success correlated to some increased opportunities for women in Turkey, it is not possible to conclude with this data that the increase in Islamism caused the increase in opportunities. As discussed in Chapters II and III, other factors besides religion have influenced women's place in civil society. Figures 15 and 16 illustrate how in both Turkey in Egypt over the past 25 years, access to communication and clean water has greatly increased. One might conclude that these factors could also influence the increase in female education shown in Figures 8 and 9.
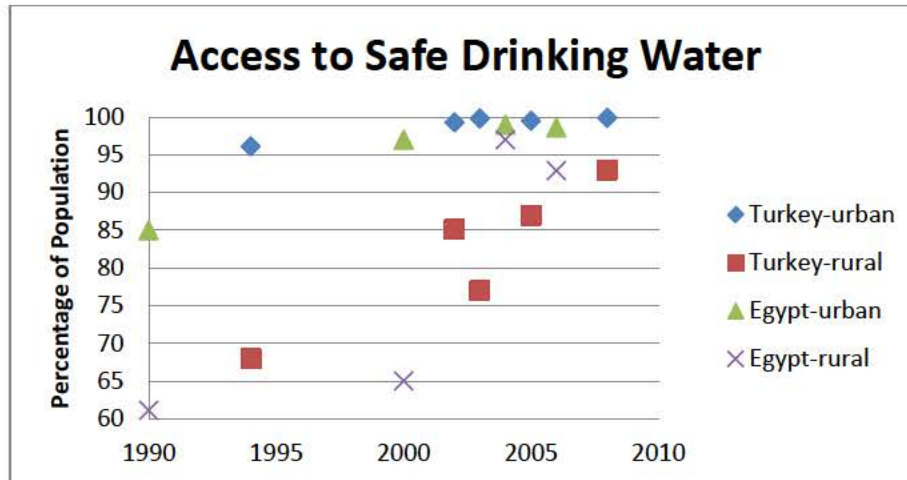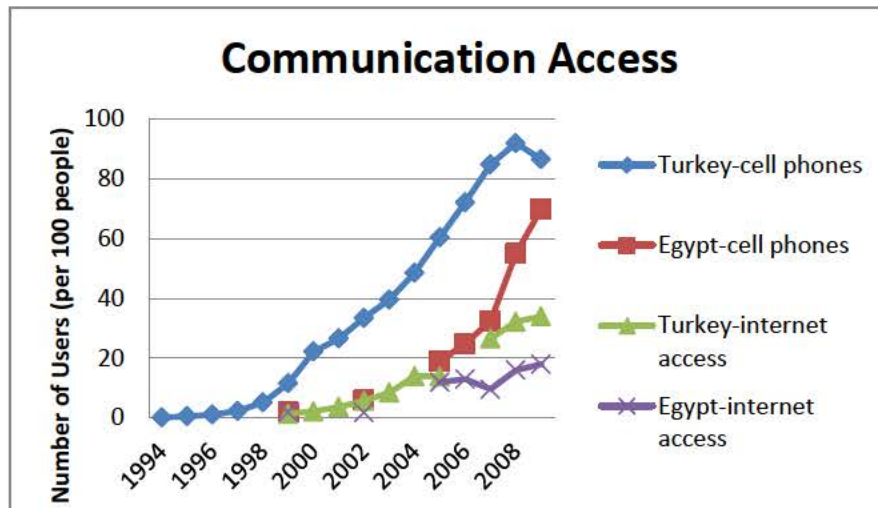
Figure 15.   Other Factors—Access to Water[303]

Figure 16.   Other Factors—Cell Phone and Internet Usage[304]

[303] T.R. Prime Ministry Undersecretariat of State Planning Organization, *Millennium Development Goals Report: Turkey 2005*, United Nations Development Programme, accessed February 21, 2015, 56, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Turkey/Turkey_MDGReport_2005.pdf; T.R. Prime Ministry Undersecretariat of State Planning Organization, *Millennium Development Goals Report: Turkey 2010*, United Nations Development Programme, accessed February 21, 2015, 52, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Turkey/Millennium_Development_Goals_Report_2010__Turkey__English.pdf; Ministry of Economic Development, *Egypt: Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*, United Nations Development Programme, accessed February 21, 2015, 54, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Egypt/Egypt%20MDG%20Mid%20Term%20Assessment%20Report%202008.pdf; Public Administration Research & Consultation Center, *Reporting on the Millennium Development Goals at the Country Level: Egypt*, United Nations Development Programme, last modified August 2002, 32, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Egypt/Egypt_MDGReport_2002.pdf.

D. CONCLUSION

The data discussed in this chapter shows a correlation between increased political Islam in Turkey and increased political and educational opportunities for women. Egypt does not mirror this, and due to past electoral laws and current sentiment towards the Muslim Brotherhood it is difficult to conclude how much Islamism affects women. Furthermore, although the data shows a correlation between increased Islamism and education, the variables used in this study are too narrow to conclude that increased Islamism causes increased educational opportunities.

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[304] T.R. Prime Ministry, *Millennium Development Goals Report: Turkey 2005*, 69; T.R. Prime Ministry, *Millennium Development Goals Report: Turkey 2010*, 60-61; Ministry of Economic Development, *Egypt's Progress towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals (2010)*, United Nations Development Programme, accessed February 21, 2015, 130, http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/MDG/english/MDG%20Country%20Reports/Egypt/2010%20MDGR_English_R5.pdf; Ministry of Economic Development, *Egypt: Achieving*, 63.

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V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated a potential connection between rising Islamism and the role of women in civil society. Quantifying religious sentiment and how it affects women is difficult, and the conclusion of this study is that the two main variables are too broad to definitively conclude a correlation. Increased Islamism correlates to some increased rights for women, but it is impossible to establish causation between rising Islamism and greater rights. Simultaneously, increased Islamism results in decreased rights in other aspects of life.

Chapter II looked at Turkey through a review of current scholarly work, and concluded that the place of women in civil society is tied to multiple factors. While calls for reform have come from secular and religious political organizations, usually they were the result of other motivations besides women's rights. Educational and employment opportunities steadily increased due to a desire to modernize the economy. Political opportunities had more to do with the openness of the government to any independent political organizations than to gender. Family law and personal status were more complex. Despite religious opposition, the secular policies enacted by Ataturk's government resulted in increased rights for women. In contrast, the lifting of the ban on the headscarf by the AK Party can also be seen as an increase in women's personal rights.

Current scholarly work on Egypt, which was reviewed in Chapter III, concluded that entrenched patriarchy, which in some cases was tied to religious sentiment and in others was not, was the greatest challenge for women. Similar to Turkey, governments and religious leaders supported education. Although governments supported female employment as an economic necessity, women faced a challenging environment finding work that was considered equal in importance to men's. Furthermore, similar to the situation in Turkey, changes to personal status laws faced religious backlash. While Turkey was able to change codes in 1926,[305] Egyptian women had to wait until 1979 for

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[305] Kandiyoti, "End of Empire," 22-3.

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large-scale changes.[306] Even then, the codes were changed back under President Mubarak, and as of 2005, women were still working toward equal personal status rights.[307]

Chapter IV echoes the conclusions of Chapters II and III. Data illustrates that women have gained more educational and employment opportunities in Turkey over the last 30 years. In Egypt, while women have also gained more educational opportunities, the employment data shows inequality between men and women. Parliamentary participation increased for women in Turkey; however, making conclusions on political electoral results is difficult for both countries due to past laws outlawing religious political parties and mandating parliamentary seats to women. Although the data shows a weak but measurable correlation between rising Islamism and rising educational opportunities, the variables are too narrow to conclude there is causation. As discussed by Chapters II and III, other factors affect women's access to employment.

Overall, there is a correlation between Islamism and increased education, but not other factors. Reviewing the potential hypotheses set forth in Chapter I, this study concludes that validity of the hypothesis is dependent on the variable of women's status that is studied. H1, that there is no correlation between Islamism and opportunities for women, appears true for employment and political opportunities. Meanwhile, H2—there is a correlation between increased political Islam and increased female opportunity—is true for education, and H3—political Islam correlates to less opportunities for women—is true for personal status laws. Furthermore, although there are some similarities between Egypt and Turkey, this study, in particular Chapter IV, illustrates how these countries are dissimilar.

This thesis does not definitively state whether rising political Islam positively or negatively impacts women. It does, however, show that the role of women is a complex issue that can be looked at through multiple elements that are affected by many different variables. From a policy perspective, this study shows that the Muslim world is not

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[306] Badran, "Competing Agendas," 224-5.

[307] Megahed and Lack, "Colonial legacy," 407.

monolithic, and there is not an overwhelming correlation between Islamist societal tendencies and a disempowered position for women in society. A women's role in society is complex in any country, and that, as well as women's desires, need to be taken into account when implementing policy aimed at making their lives better.

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